

LOÓB AND KAPWA
THOMAS AQUINAS AND A FILIPINO VIRTUE ETHICS

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For my father

and his unfailing love and support

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1 Introduction

1.1 Statement of purpose

The seeds of this work came from two random encounters which happened at the same time. The first encounter was with Norris Clarke's creative retrieval of Aquinas, in particular his emphasis on "person-in-relation" as a fundamental metaphysical principle. The second encounter was with the movement Virgilio Enriquez founded called *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology) and its "core value" called *kapwa* (the other person). My instinct at the time was that Clarke's "person-in-relation" and Enriquez's *kapwa*, though not exactly the same, were similar enough to be mutually enriching concepts. The first was backed up by the comprehensive metaphysics of Aquinas, the second by a real historical culture, specifically Filipino Tagalog culture. Perhaps in these two concepts one could have an interesting dialogue between metaphysics and living culture.

But things became more interesting. From this starting point I further investigated the similarities between Thomism and Filipino values. What I found was that the correspondence between "person-in-relation" and *kapwa* was just the tip of the iceberg. Thomism in fact provides the philosophical resources for a brand new interpretation of what has for almost half a century only been called Filipino "values." Thomism provides a "virtue ethics." As I will argue in the first chapter, there are significant philosophical advantages to reinterpreting the Filipino "value system" as a Filipino "virtue ethics." Ethical concepts which were often a source of bewilderment for Filipino scholars begin to make more sense, and form a more internally coherent system, once they are reinterpreted and rearranged as a virtue ethics.

The primary goal of this dissertation is the articulation and organization of a "Filipino virtue ethics." It is both a constructive and descriptive project. It is constructive in that it builds on the metaphysics, psychology and ethics of Aquinas in order to construct a Filipino virtue ethics. This foundation helps define Filipino ethical concepts and provides an organizing principle for these concepts. This project is also descriptive in that it takes into account how Filipino scholars have described these concepts, and even more importantly, how they simply work in the everyday life of Filipinos. The constructive aspect is validated only insofar as it provides a better explanation for what can be observed in real life.

The first chapter of this dissertation is about setting the stage. It gives a glossary of the relevant concepts of Filipino virtue ethics on the one hand, and the relevant concepts of Thomism on the other. This is followed by a brief discussion of methodology and precedents. The last section of this chapter provides an explanation

of why the concept of “virtue” is superior to “values” when it comes to dealing with Filipino ethical concepts.

The second chapter provides a very crucial “historical survey” of the Philippines in terms of the three major traditions: the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition, the Spanish Catholic tradition, and the American modern tradition. The first two provided the material for Filipino virtue ethics (the words, concepts, and the living practice) but the American tradition is what provided the scholarship into this material (the interpretation and theorizing). A major mistake to avoid is a mono-traditionalist interpretation of Filipino culture. Filipino culture is in fact what I call a “hybrid” culture still in the process of synthesis. The three traditions are important for a proper understanding and interpretation of Filipino ethical concepts. Moreover, this historical survey provides a historical justification for using Thomism insofar as Thomism is a part of the Spanish Catholic tradition and is a “historical insider,” so to speak.

The third chapter focuses on the “two pillars” of Filipino virtue ethics, *loób* and *kapwa*. *Loób* is directly translated as “inside” and “will” and *kapwa* is directly translated as “other person.” But as I will explain, there are serious misunderstandings that can arise when they are explained from the modern frameworks of subjectivity/objectivity or liberal individualism, which is often taken for granted in English philosophical discourse. To combat these misunderstandings, I will borrow from Aquinas’ metaphysics and psychology and reinterpret *loób* and *kapwa* in a “pre-modern” way. I will also show that other Filipino ethical concepts can be considered “habits” of the *loób*, and this will serve as evidence that what we indeed have is a “virtue ethics.” The Filipino virtues move in between the *loób* and *kapwa* in a circular and increasing dynamic that strengthens the human relationship, towards the goal or *telos* of *pagkakaisa* (unity and oneness). What this unity means will also be discussed in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter uses the virtue ethics of Aquinas to articulate and organize the Filipino virtues. I am going to pair five principal virtues in Aquinas (*caritas*, *prudentia*, *justitia*, *temperantia*, and *fortitudo*) with five well-documented Filipino virtues (*kagandahang-loób*, *pakikiramdam*, *utang-na-loób*, *hiya*, *lakas-ng-loób*). I also explain what the Filipino virtues are and describe how they work based on the research of Filipino scholars. Aquinas’ virtue ethics assists the Filipino virtues to become more systematic and coherent. In the process of comparison, Filipino virtue ethics is shown to be much more “relational” than Aquinas’ virtue ethics.

1.2 Glossary of relevant concepts

The glossary is divided into two parts: the first for the concepts related to Filipino virtue ethics, and the second for the Thomistic concepts that are relevant for this discussion. The definitions are kept basic, to be further defined and elaborated in their respective sections. Such a glossary is necessary since the reader who is familiar with one field is more likely to be completely unfamiliar with the other field; these two subject areas, what has been called Filipino values and Thomism, have never been previously combined. Furthermore, since the Filipino concepts come from a specific culture they will be very foreign for the non-Filipino reader. This glossary aims to provide a smoother introduction to such foreign concepts.

1. *Loób* (pronounced as two syllables with short o's, lo-ob.) – This word is literally translated into English as “inside.” It is used to describe the inside of physical objects such as a house or a pot. However, when used for a person, it talks about the person’s “holistic and relational will,” i.e. his will towards others. This concept is fundamental because the Filipino virtues are mostly compound words which say something about the kind of *loób* that a person has, as is shown below.

2. *Kapwa* – This word is literally translated into English as “other” or “other person” but in a way it is untranslatable into English. This is because it is embedded in an entirely different worldview and web of meanings unique to Philippine culture and history—namely, a Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition mixed with a Spanish Catholic tradition. It is tribal and Catholic at the same time. *Kapwa* therefore has been variously translated by local scholars as “shared self,” “shared identity,” or “self-in-the-other,” but these translations require much qualification.

3. *Kagandahang-loób* – This word is literally translated as “beauty-of-will.” The beauty of the will in this context is determined by one’s relationship towards the *kapwa*. Someone who has genuine concern for others and the willingness to help them in times of need is a person who has *kagandahang-loób*. The source of its pattern comes from a mother’s love and concern for her child, most especially during the child’s weakness in infancy.

4. *Utang-na-Loób* – This word is literally translated as “debt-of-will.” It is the natural response to *kagandahang-loób*. It is the self-imposed obligation to give back the same kind of *kagandahang-loób* to the person who has shown it to you. When *utang-na-loób* is returned “with interest,” i.e. more than what is expected, it can bring about a circular dynamic (a “positive feedback loop”) between two persons where the one who previously showed *kagandahang-loób* is now the one with *utang-na-loób*, then it oscillates back and forth strengthening the relationship in the process.

5. *Pakikiramdam* – The nearest translation is “relational sensitivity” or “empathy.” It is about being skilled in reading the other person’s feelings and correctly guessing his or her inner state. It requires receptivity to many non-verbal cues, such as subtle facial expressions, tones of voice, and bodily gestures. The Filipino’s propensity for indirect communication, though it might be a source of frustration to the outsider, gives way to a kind of “emotional intelligence,” a way of both evaluating and deepening the relationship with the other person.

6. *Hiya* – *Hiya* has been variously translated as “embarrassment” or “shame.” I will argue (section 4.5.1) that there are in fact two senses of *hiya*, one which refers to a passion, and another which refers to a virtue. The virtue of *hiya* controls and restrains verbal communication to preserve the dignity of the *kapwa*. It is most often encountered in verbal communication, but on a more general level it is about restraining any individualistic or selfish impulse to put the welfare of the *kapwa* first.

7. *Lakas-ng-Loób/Bahala na* – *Lakas-ng-loób* is literally translated as “courage,” which is correct enough. *Bahala na* is sometimes translated as “fatalism” or “resignation,” but is translated more positively as “courage to face uncertainty.” Like *hiya*, these two can degenerate into negative concepts when separated from the whole scheme of Filipino virtue ethics. The unique history of the Philippines must also be taken into account in order to see that this is not just any kind of courage, but a courage to sacrifice oneself for the group. As we will see later, the Tagalog *pasyon* (passion of Christ) play is the key to understanding this virtue and the ideal traits of the *bayani* (Filipino hero).

8. *Pagkakaisa* – *Pagkakaisa* means “unity” or “oneness.” It is the goal (or *telos*) of Filipino virtue ethics. The Filipino virtues draw the *loób* and *kapwa* closer to each other so that their wills become one in terms of willing their common good and in the commitment to preserve and strengthen their relationship. It is the closest counterpart to Aristotle’s *eudaimonia* (literally, “having a good guardian spirit,” but generally means “happiness”) and Aquinas’ *beatitudo* (beatitude).

Now we turn to the relevant concepts from Aquinas. While there is an overwhelming number of philosophical terms in Aquinas, this glossary is limited to those with an important role in his virtue ethics and which serve the articulation of a Filipino virtue ethics.

1. Act and Potency (*actus et potentia*) – A central doctrine in the metaphysics of Aristotle and Aquinas, it is a way of accounting for the continuous identity of a thing through the process of change. Any one thing is partly in act and partly in potency. A seed is in act insofar as it is a seed yet has the potency to be a tree. This potency is *actualized* when it finally grows up. But the seed and the tree are the same thing, the same “substance,” despite the changes. A block of marble has the potency to become

a statue of David, and through the action of a sculptor can acquire the *actual* form of the statue of David. Its hidden potency can be revealed or brought to light. The notion of potency is most useful for our discussion because it will provide a suitable alternative to the interpretation of *loób* as “inside.” Instead of interpreting *loób* as modern “interiority” or “subjectivity,” which is the mistake of many scholars, I will reinterpret it as “potency.”

2. Substance and Accident (*substantia et accidens*) – Substance comes from the Latin *sub stare*, “to stand under.” It denotes an entity existing in itself and not in (or “on top of”) another. A tree or a man is a substance. Accident is the opposite of that since it cannot exist of itself but requires another. The color green for example, in “the tree is green,” requires a substance, the tree, for it to exist. The color green cannot exist by itself, without a substance.

3. Habit (*habitus*) – One kind of accident is a “quality”¹, and one kind of quality is a “habit.”² A habit is a quality that is difficult to change, and which disposes something to a particular kind of activity. Though an ordinary understanding of human habit might include involuntary habits (the habit of scratching one’s chin, the habit of blinking too much), Aquinas explicitly connects habit with the will and he only considers those voluntary habits which one “chooses” to do. The habit of eating junk food, the habit of thinking positive thoughts, and the habit of suppressing one’s anger, are all properly habits in Aquinas’ account.

4. Virtue (*virtus*) – In a general sense a virtue is anything that enables something to perform its activity well (one can speak of the virtue of a horse or a knife, for example). In a moral sense however, a virtue is a “habit” in a human being that disposes one to good works. The opposite of virtue is vice, which is a habit that disposes one to bad works. One gains virtue or vice through practice and exercise. The more one practices a virtue or vice, the more likely one will repeat the behavior in the future, or even increase its intensity. The virtues and vices serve as the criteria for whether a person is a good or bad individual. I will list five of the seven principal virtues of Aquinas below.

5. Powers of the soul (*potentiae animae*) – The human soul for Aquinas is whole and undivided. However, there are different things that it can *do*. This is why Aquinas distinguishes different “powers” of the soul: reason/intellect, will, and the sensitive appetite (further divided into the concupiscible and irascible appetites). The reason/intellect *knows*; the will *chooses*; the concupiscible appetite *desires* a sensible object; and the irascible appetite *fights* or *endures* for that sensible object.

¹ A quality The other accidents according to Aristotle are: quantity, relation, place, time, position, state (*habitus*, such as in the sense of “dress”), action, and affection (*passio*) (*Categories* chs. 6-9; cf. Hugon 1927, 75; Gredt 1961, 154).

² The other qualities according to Aristotle are: capacities, affective qualities, shape (*Categories* ch. 8.2; cf. Hugon 1927, 79; Gredt 1961, 169-172)

6. Will (*voluntas*) – The power of the will (*voluntas*) is the most important for this dissertation because it is the direct counterpart to the Filipino *loób*. Whereas Aquinas considers three powers of the soul, Filipino virtue ethics only deals with one, the *loób* which is a more “holistic” and “relational” will than Aquinas’ *voluntas*. It is “holistic” because it contains the rational and sensitive powers, and it is “relational” because it is always oriented towards the *kapwa*. However as I will argue, these aspects of *loób* can best be articulated by using the metaphysics and psychology of Aquinas.

7. Seven virtues – The seven virtues comprise the three theological virtues (faith, hope and love) from the Christian tradition, and the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, courage) from the Greek tradition. For Aquinas, all other virtues can be subsumed under these seven virtues as secondary virtues. In this dissertation we will only make use of five of his seven virtues; we will not include the theological virtues of faith and hope.

8. Charity (*caritas*) – For Aquinas there are two kinds of love: the passion of love (*amor concupiscentiae*) which is the desire to possess the object of love, and the theological virtue of love (*caritas*) which is about loving God and loving one’s neighbor for God’s sake. We will later focus on one specific aspect of *caritas*, called benevolence or goodwill (*benevolentia*), with the Filipino virtue of *kagandahang-loób*.

9. Justice (*justitia*) – Justice involves giving to others what is due to them. According to Aquinas this is *the* virtue that is properly directed toward others, while other virtues primarily concern individual perfection.³ This of course marks a major difference with the Filipino virtues which are all directed to others. We will later compare the virtue of justice with one of the most popular and well-known Filipino virtues, *utang-na-loób*.

10. Prudence (*prudentia*) – Prudence is acting according to right reason and being able to determine the “mean” or “middle way” of action. Since reason is not a separate faculty in Filipino virtue ethics, the Filipino counterpart to prudence called *pakikiramdam* has obvious differences in being more intuitive/affective rather than rational. However, *pakikiramdam* is similar in how it tries to detect a healthy mean in the relationship.

11. Temperance (*temperantia*) – The virtue of temperance controls the natural desires (i.e. food, drink, sex) according to right reason. It involves self-control and restraint and is an individual virtue that can be practiced without others. The Filipino virtue of *hiya* takes on a more social dimension in controlling and restraining any impulse that might exploit or compromise the *kapwa*.

³ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 1.

12. Courage/Fortitude (*fortitudo*) – The virtue of courage or fortitude enables one to resist fear, pain and hardship for the sake of the good. In Aquinas martyrdom is the supreme form of courage, because it makes one prepared to sacrifice one’s own life for the sake of love for God. The Filipino *lakas-ng-loób* and its accompanying act of *bahala na* is similar to martyrdom in evoking a sacrifice for the *kapwa*.

13. Passion (*passio*) – A passion is what we now normally call an “emotion.” The experiences of love (in desire, lust, or falling in love), anger, joy, and grief are passions. It is something that one “undergoes” (*passio* comes from the word *pati*, “to suffer”). It is often accompanied by bodily changes (e.g. palpitations of the heart, sweating, high blood pressure, etc.) Their subject is the sensitive appetite (the concupiscible and the irascible appetites). The virtues of temperance and courage control them directly, and the virtue of prudence brings them in accord with right reason.

14. Beatitude (*beatitudo*) – The goal of the virtues in Aquinas is “beatitude,” which consists in complete union with God. It can only be completely possessed in the afterlife. The goal of Aquinas’ virtue ethics is explicitly theological in its orientation; the virtues are supposed to direct man to this eternal end. This is in contrast with the goal of Filipino virtue ethics (*pagkakaisa*), which is more human and interpersonal.

1.3 Methodology and precedents

This dissertation will actively use the metaphysics, psychology, and ethics of Aquinas to articulate and organize Filipino ethical concepts as a “Filipino virtue ethics.” When it comes to the original use of Thomistic philosophy, my direct inspiration is Norris Clarke and his “creative retrieval” of Aquinas (cf. Clarke 1994b; 2001; 2009). Other indirect inspirations include 20th century Thomists who have sought to apply Thomism to contemporary issues (Jacques Maritain and Charles de Koninck), or tried to integrate Thomism with other philosophical systems (Edith Stein and Joseph Marechal).

The first and second chapters will justify my use of Thomism for this undertaking. The first chapter will expose the deficiency of the current discourse on Filipino “values” and the second will show that Thomism is a “historical insider” in Philippine intellectual history and is the most suitable dialogue partner for Filipino ethical concepts. My use of Thomistic metaphysics and psychology will become prominent in the third chapter in which I articulate the crucial Filipino concepts of *loób* and *kapwa*. My use of Aquinas’ virtue ethics will be evident in the fourth and last chapter where I articulate and organize the Filipino virtues themselves according to the pattern of the principal virtues found in Aquinas.

There are many precedents for the revival of virtue ethics in the 20th century, which will be enumerated later (section 1.4.4). Perhaps the most notable precedent for this project is a “comparative study” of virtues from East and West entitled *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Yearley 1990).⁴ In this work, Yearley explains the background context of each thinker and their respective virtue theories, while proceeding to trace “similarities within differences and differences within similarities” (Yearley 1990, 1). Because of the wide cultural and historical distance between Mencius and Aquinas, Yearley proceeds with an in-depth comparison of only one virtue, that of courage. His attempt nevertheless set a precedent for future studies between the virtues of different cultures. As I mentioned, however, this dissertation is not so much a “comparative study” as much as it is a constructive and descriptive project. It is not merely a matter of setting two ethical systems side by side and comparing their similarities and differences (though their similarities and differences are certainly revealed). Rather, the philosophy of Aquinas (with its sophisticated conceptual resources) is used to articulate and organize Filipino ethical concepts as a “Filipino virtue ethics.”

The work of Alasdair MacIntyre is also a significant inspiration and precedent for this dissertation. His work was important for the revival of virtue ethics. His historical analysis of the synthesis and conflict of traditions in the development of Western ethics informs my own historical survey in the second chapter.

Let me also qualify right away that I intend to construct and describe *a* Filipino virtue ethics, and not *the* (one and only) Filipino virtue ethics. The ethical concepts tackled here come from the “Tagalog” culture, which has the most number of native speakers⁵ (the national Filipino language is based on the Tagalog language), inhabits the capital of the country, Manila, and shows the most thorough cultural synthesis of three traditions, namely Southeast Asian, Spanish, and American. What is said about this culture could apply to a lesser degree to other cultural groups of the Luzon and Visayas regions and much less to the cultural groups of southern Mindanao who possess the Islamic tradition and deserve a separate study altogether. I will later argue that Filipino (Tagalog) culture is a “hybrid” culture that is still in the process of synthesizing three traditions.

1.4 Value versus virtue

One of the primary objectives of this dissertation is to advocate for a shift of thinking: from Filipino “values” to Filipino “virtues.” Although at first glance this might seem merely a matter of semantics, it actually has profound philosophical implications.

⁴ Another excellent comparative study is *The Ethics of Confucius and Aristotle: Mirrors of Virtue* (Yu 2007).

⁵ According to the 2000 Philippine census by the the National Statistics Office, the numbers of native speakers (mother tongue) for the major languages of the Philippines are: 26,387,855 (Tagalog), 21,340,000 (Cebuano), 7,779,000 (Ilocano), 7,000,979 (Hiligaynon), 3,100,000 (Waray-Waray), 2,900,000 (Kapampangan). For the controversial historical development of “Filipino” as the national language, see Tupas (2014).

Talking about these Filipino concepts in terms of “values” has led to a dead end in this field of study and has led to anachronistic misunderstandings. Many Filipino values also tend to be studied in isolation. Virtue ethics on the other hand is able to organize everything into an internally coherent system, while at the same time preserving the “pre-modern” aspect of the Filipino virtues. It is also not simply that we are imposing a foreign theory onto the concepts; Filipino culture has its own indigenous ethics of *loób* and *kapwa* which, when in dialogue with Western ethics, can be easily interpreted and classified as a virtue ethics.

In this section I first recount the exciting “discovery of Filipino values” by American and American-trained Filipino scholars in the latter half of the 20th century. Then second, I enumerate some of the problems with the values theory they used which has led to a dead end in values research. Third, I point out the philosophical advantages of virtue ethics and how it more aptly fits the data. And fourth, I briefly mention the international revival of virtue ethics in the 20th century and how, if my argument has been convincing, a turn towards Filipino virtue ethics can provide a fresh new contender in the global ethical conversation.

1.4.1 The discovery of Filipino “values”

The scholarly interest on Filipino values can be traced to Frank Lynch’s famous article “Social Acceptance” of 1961. Lynch was an American Jesuit anthropologist who worked at the Ateneo De Manila University. He was one of the directors of the research for the *Area Handbook on the Philippines* (1956), and he also founded the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) at Ateneo in 1960. The article “Social Acceptance” was the first article of the book *Four Readings on Philippine Values* (1961), which went through no less than four editions, the last one in 1973. This work was instrumental in establishing the field of research on Filipino values.

Though prior to Lynch and his colleagues there were also attempts to articulate Filipino values⁶, what was different was their utilization of anthropology and psychology. Their attempt was more “objective” in that it was not purely driven by feelings of nationalism but also subscribed to empirical research. Lynch utilized the Values Orientation Theory of Clyde Kluckhohn, a famous American anthropologist of the 1950s. Kluckhohn defined value as “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action” (Kluckhohn 1951, 395). F. Landa Jocano, the most prominent Filipino anthropologist of the 20th century who obtained his PhD from the University of Chicago, accepted Kluckhohn’s definition as

⁶ During the Spanish period one can point to *Urbana at Feliza* (1864) by the Filipino priest Modesto de Castro which depicted how a Filipina should properly conduct herself. Another work was the more controversial *Si Tandang Basyong Macunat* (1885) by the Spanish Franciscan friar Miguel Bustamante which extolled Filipino rural culture in opposition to city life. But it was the growing sense of nationalism in the early years of American colonization that generated numerous works on the topic. Representative examples include Noberto Romualdez’s *The Psychology of the Filipino* (1925), Teodoro Kalaw’s *A Code of Ethics for the Filipino* (1939), and Camilo Osias’ *The Filipino Way of Life* (1940).

the “classic and universally accepted definition of value” (Jocano 1997, 17). This discourse of values, taken from anthropology, was generally taken for granted by Filipino psychologists such as Jaime Bulatao and Virgilio Enriquez (both also obtained their doctorates in the United States, the first from Fordham University and the latter from Northwestern University; why this is relevant will be clearer later when we talk about the American contribution to education in the Philippines). Since these foundations the phrase “Filipino values” has been the main term used in this field of research within the social sciences.⁷ Subsequently it has also become a staple term in popular discourse, especially when people talk about the search for a “Filipino identity.”

One can only imagine how exciting it must have been for the early pioneers. Philippine independence from America was granted in 1946 and a study of Filipino values served as part of the forging of an independent national identity. Many Filipino scholars were able to obtain scholarships at top US universities and returned eager to use the latest intellectual theories and methods to contribute to this project. It was also a time of lively debate and controversy. Much of the controversy was sparked by Lynch’s identification of “smooth interpersonal relations” (SIR) as the main value of Filipino culture.

SIR may be defined as a facility at getting along with others in such a way as to avoid outward signs of conflict: glum or sour looks, harsh words, open disagreement, or physical violence. It connotes the smile, the friendly lift of the eyebrow, the pat on the back, the squeeze of the arm, the word of praise or friendly concern. It means being agreeable, even under difficult circumstances, and of keeping quiet or out of sight when discretion passes the word [sic]. It means a sensitivity to what other people feel at any given moment, and a willingness and ability to change tack (if not direction) to catch the lightest favoring breeze. (Lynch 1962, 89)

To think that this was the main value of Filipino culture gave the impression that Filipino culture was shallow, or at worse, hypocritical. It was also complicated by the fact that Lynch’s analysis was nevertheless *partly* right. It is true that Filipinos generally value smooth interpersonal relations but the question is, was there not more to it than preserving an outward appearance? Filipino scholars criticized Lynch for not capturing the entire picture. It also did not help that Lynch was an American and not a Filipino and he could be accused of providing only a foreigner’s point of view. Filipino scholars thought that to get to the heart of the matter required Filipino scholars to talk about Filipino values. The most formidable challenge to the Ateneo school of Lynch et al came from the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino psychology) movement founded by Virgilio Enriquez of the University of the Philippines (UP) in the 1970s. Filipino psychology represented not just a reaction against the concept of SIR but against the dominant Western psychological theories at the time, such as the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud and the behaviorism of B. F. Skinner. Instead of

⁷ More recent work on values that builds on Kluckhohn include the work of Schwarz and Bilsky (1987, 1990), which has been used by Clemente et al. in a study on Filipino values (2008).

SIR, Enriquez identified the Filipino concept of *kapwa* as the “core value” of Filipinos.

In the Philippine value system, *kapwa* is at the very foundation of human values. This core value then determines not only the person’s personality but more so his personhood or *pagkatao* [humanity]. (Enriquez 1992, 76)

He proceeded to describe *kapwa* in this way:

When asked for the closest English equivalent of *kapwa*, one word that comes to mind is the English word “others.” However, the Filipino word *kapwa* is very different from the English word “others.” In Filipino, *kapwa* is the unity of the “self” and “others.” The English “others” is actually used in opposition to the “self,” and implies the recognition of the self as a separate identity. In contrast, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others. (Enriquez 1992, 52)

According to Enriquez it is through this core value of *kapwa* that we are properly able to understand the other Filipino values. *Kapwa* should serve as the starting point. One advantage was that *kapwa* was conceptually “deeper” than SIR. It was not just about a harmony of appearances but a genuine harmony of selves. In fact, the appeals to phrases such as a “shared identity” or a “unity of self and others” almost lent forth a semi-mystical property. It seemed as though *kapwa* was incapable of being defined through the terminology of Western psychology. This compelled the Filipino psychology movement to espouse an “indigenous psychology,” one which was more in tune with the thoroughly relational and interpersonal aspect of Filipino culture.⁸ For example, instead of the impersonal experiments of behaviorism, Filipino psychologists developed methods such as “groping” (*pakapa-kapa*) or “asking questions” (*pagtatanong-tanong*) which deliberately refused to treat the other person as a test subject (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000, 59-60).

I consider the identification of *kapwa* as “core value” as one of the milestones of this field of research. Its immediate benefit was to replace an English word (SIR) with a popular Filipino word, and in general encouraged scholars to pay closer attention to the Filipino language. As I have already mentioned, I consider *kapwa* to be one of the main pillars of a Filipino virtue ethics. This will be expounded in the next chapter.

There are other figures who played a role in this field. The historian Zeus Salazar was responsible for establishing a perspective called *pantayong pananaw* (“for-us-perspective”) and the anthropologist Prospero Covar for the *Pilipinohiya* (“Filipinology”) perspective. Both perspectives were contemporary with the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* movement and intermingled with it. I prefer Filipino psychology over these other two movements because of its prioritization of *kapwa*

⁸ For the best survey of the Filipino psychology movement since its inception, see “*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez” (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000).

and how it avoids coining new terms and takes the Filipino words as they are. I also have some issues with the other two scholars when it comes to an understanding (or in this case, arguably, a misunderstanding) of the other concept of *loób* which I will discuss later.

Simultaneous with the pioneering achievements of Filipino anthropology and psychology there were also similar developments in Filipino philosophy and theology. The two figureheads were priests from the young order of the Society of the Divine Word (*Societas Verbi Divini*, more popularly called the Divine Word Missionaries). Leonardo Mercado published his *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* in 1976 which is considered the earliest attempt at formulating an explicitly Filipino philosophy. His confrere Dionisio Miranda was a prolific author of works relevant to the field such as *Loob: The Filipino Within* (1989), the first extended discussion of *loób* in the literature. Other significant figures include the Jesuit Roque Ferriols who wrote and taught philosophy in the Filipino language, the Jesuit Albert Alejo who also wrote another work on *loób* in the Filipino language, and Jose de Mesa, a Catholic lay theologian who used indigenous Filipino concepts in his theology.⁹ I refer to all these authors in this dissertation. However, what is interesting is that despite the activity of Catholic priests and theologians hardly anyone of them mentioned Aquinas as an aid in the study of Filipino values. The SVD priests preferred to use a linguistic approach, which simply meant an awareness of how the Filipino words and concepts were used in daily life and started their theorizing from there. The same approach is found in the Jesuits who preferred to discourse in Filipino and in de Mesa who tried to substitute Filipino terms for traditional terms in Western theology.

Active research on Filipino values reached its peak during the years following the 1986 EDSA “People Power” Revolution.¹⁰ Senate Resolution No. 10 sponsored by Senator Leticia Shahani and approved in 1987 resolved to:

...immediately conduct a joint inquiry into the strengths and weaknesses of the character of the Filipino with a view to finding solutions to the ills plaguing our society and strengthening the moral fiber of the nation... to invite resource persons from the appropriate departments of the Executive Branch of government and recognized experts in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, sociology and other social sciences, who may be of assistance in identifying such strengths and weaknesses and in the formulation of measures to solve the social ills and strengthen the nation’s moral fiber. (Shahani 1993, 6-7)

The result was a report called the “Moral Recovery Program” headed by the psychologist Patricia Licuanan which listed general strengths of Filipino culture such

⁹ There are also Protestant contributions, such as Rodrigo Tano’s *Theology in the Philippine Setting* (1981) and Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano’s *Filipino Values and our Christian Faith* (1990).

¹⁰ This revolution led to the departure of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was President of the Philippines from 1965 to 1986. Marcos ruled under martial law from 1972 until 1981 and his regime was known for excess, corruption, and violence.

as *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (treating others as *kapwa*) and family orientation, and weaknesses such as extreme personalism and colonial mentality (Licuanan 1994). Under President Corazon Aquino the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) made values education one of their priorities, culminating in their Values Education Framework in 1988 (Palispis 1995, 10-23). The Moral Recovery Program of Shahani was also followed up by Proclamation No. 62 of President Fidel Ramos in 1992 and then Executive Order No. 319 in 1996.¹¹ These two edicts sought to engage all sectors of government and society in the task of moral recovery.

Enriquez published his main work *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* in 1992 and had a good following in the UP Diliman Psychology department. These were promising times when it was hoped that research on Filipino values would lead to a direct improvement in the moral and ethical situation of the country, especially from the moral decline and atrocities of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship. But the movement of Filipino values lost steam and underwent a gradual decline after the untimely death of Virgilio Enriquez in 1994. Some of his best students like Rogelia Pe-Pua left the country and continued to research on indigenous psychology in Australia. Perhaps one could also detect a general dismay in inculcating Filipino values thanks to the corrupt presidencies of Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who came after Ramos. In the 21st century there were still several publications that continued the direction of Filipino psychology such as Katrin de Guia's *Kapwa: The Self in the Other* (2005), along with the three *Kapwa* conferences organized by de Guia and company in 2004, 2008, and 2012. However, in terms of journal and book publications one can see that the interest in Filipino psychology, and Filipino values in general, has waned. Many of the new publications are only historical surveys of the movement rather than developing anything new.

Though it is unfortunate that Filipino psychology and Filipino values were not able to enter the 21st century as a thriving field of research, I propose that it is not so much because of the circumstances such as the death of a founder or corrupt presidents but because of an intrinsic deficiency in the term “value” itself. It is a term that cannot capture the whole complexity of Filipino ethical concepts. Let us consider some of its problems.

1.4.2 The problem with Filipino “values”

Let us return to Kluckhohn's definition of value: “a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action.”

¹¹ Proclamation No. 62 states: “The Moral Recovery Program will primarily aim to inculcate the following virtues for national development: pride in being Filipino; caring and sharing; integrity and accountability; self-reliance; good manners and right conduct which shall also cover the value and habits of courtesy, discipline and respect for authority and institutions; people empowerment; and self-reflection and analysis” (Ramos 1993, 68). Executive Order No. 319 enjoined government offices “to lay the necessary foundations of the moral recovery crusade for Filipino core value infusion into the organization's culture, systems and processes” (Ramos 1996).

(Kluckhohn 1951, 395) For Lynch, values include things like a “college education” or “social mobility” which serve as “one’s standard for decision.” (Lynch 1962, 83). This means that a person who values “college education” will make decisions in favor of securing a college education over those things he considers of lesser value, for example, marrying early. A value in short is anything that a person or group finds better or more important in comparison to other things.

I state the two main problems with “value” as follows:

1. It is an evaluative term that is easily substituted for a definition, especially when applied to Filipino concepts which are not yet clearly defined.
2. It is foreign and anachronistic to Filipino concepts both on a linguistic and philosophical level.

The first problem is that “value” is an evaluative term that is easily substituted for a definition. Prior to the application of the term “value” for these Filipino concepts, these concepts previously did not have any definition at all. There was no theory foreign or indigenous which said *what* they were. Scholars tried to formulate definitions for these terms many of which could still be considered tentative or ad hoc, but they were already being taken for granted as values. Social scientists also tended to study concepts in isolation, an approach that Enriquez called the “token use” of Filipino concepts. This approach picked and chose individual concepts while neglecting the wider interrelationship of these concepts within the culture (Enriquez 1992, 72-74). Some concepts would be more defined than others, and these definitions would not be attuned to the working of other similar concepts. For example, I point out in section 4.3 how *utang-na-loób* is completely dependent on another concept, *kagandahang-loób*, but most studies on *utang-na-loób* ignore this link. There is at present still no overarching theory for all these concepts except to say that they are all “values.” Value is embraced as the de facto “group definition” or “class definition” for all of these concepts, as is clear for example in the works of Enriquez (1992, 93) and Jocano (1997). This “group definition” which becomes the default especially for those concepts which are not well defined, is not a definition per se but rather an evaluative term. It can, therefore, be very misleading when it is consciously or unconsciously accepted as a definition.

Consider, for example, how scholars have tried to provide various definitions of *utang-na-loób* without any consensus: a “system of contractual obligation” (Kaut 1961), “reciprocity” (Holnsteiner 1973), “gratitude/solidarity” (Enriquez 1992, 82), “a normative ethical concept” (de Castro 1995a), or a “debt of good will” (de Castro 1998). It is not yet clear *what* exactly *utang-na-loób* is. Is it a system? A practice? A cultural response? A matter of conscience? What is clear for many scholars is that it is a value. The statement “*utang-na-loób* is a Filipino value” is taken so much for granted that it oftentimes poses as a definition, even though it is not.

To call something a value is to describe a positive attitude towards it. It does not say *what* it is, but only that it is considered good, desirable, or important. The problem is when someone asks, “what is *utang-na-loób*?” and the first and only reliable answer is that it is a Filipino value. It gives the impression of defining what *utang-na-loób* is when in fact it is only saying that Filipinos find *utang-na-loób* good or important. It leaves the question “what is it?” unanswered. It lacks any explanatory power. Bulatao says that “value is not seen as the object itself but something *added to the object by the mind*” (Bulatao 1992, 277). We generally want to have a solid definition of the concept first before the positive appraisal that is simply *added by the mind*.

The case of *utang-na-loób*, which at least has been provided some “workable” tentative definitions, is in fact more privileged than other Filipino concepts that have remained more vague and mysterious. The concept of *utang-na-loób* should naturally be understood in light of the concept of *loób*, but as I will show later, the idea of *loób* has been misunderstood because of modernist interpretations (section 3.1). This confusion regarding *loób* can only contribute to the lack of understanding about *utang-na-loób*. It is not surprising that there are many English translations of *utang-na-loób* significantly different from each other (debt of self, debt of gratitude, debt of good will, debt of volition), this is because *loób* itself is still not well defined.

As another example, Enriquez identified *kapwa* as a “core value” presumably making it one of the most important Filipino concepts of all, but the definitions given for *kapwa*, such as “inner self shared with others” (Enriquez 1992, 52) or “self in the other” (de Guia 2005) remain unclear as long as it is not explained how the “self” can actually be “shared” or “in” the “other.” Such an explanation, which may border on metaphysics, is beyond the ken of “values.”

Let us also consider how broad the term “value” is, and how despite the possible nuances provided by recent theories on value (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck 1961; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky 1987, 1990), Filipino scholarship has simply used value as a synonym for “important” or “good.” Bulatao, one of the contributors to Lynch’s *Four Readings on Philippine Values*, had this to say about value:

The concept of “value” is one of those which, being very primitive and extremely fundamental to human life, is hard to define. Just as with the concept of “time” which, said St. Augustine, we also know but find difficult to analyze, so with the concept of value. For practical purposes, one can best take an operational description: a value is the object of a positive attitude. It is that good to which a man tends. It is the goal, the vision of which motivates him to action. It is the thing that people want. (Bulatao 1973, 93)

For Bulatao people can value money, shoes, clothes, cars, people, art, science, politics, freedom, popularity, etc. (Bulatao 1992, 277). Anything that is good or wanted can be called a “value.” Florentino Timbreza tried to answer the question, “what are Filipino values?” in this way:

They are what the people desire, want to have, to own or possess, to do, to keep, to attain, or to become. Filipino values are the objects of the people's interest, desire, preference, and aspiration. They are the things Filipinos consider good, important, proper, suitable, worthy, right, acceptable, and desirable in life. Whatever they actually like, prize, esteem, approve of, desire or enjoy constitute the people's values. And there are as many Filipino values as there are so many things valued.¹² (Timbreza 2003, 13)

Anything at all can constitute a Filipino value so long as it can be shown that a significant number of Filipinos find it good, desirable or important, but this can be an unlimited collection of things. In addition, to say that something is a Filipino value is to also imply that it is in this respect like everything else that Filipinos value, yet there is so much that is left undistinguished. There are likely very different reasons why people value different things; the reasons why someone might value college education or a nice house are probably different from why one values *kapwa* or *utang-na-loób*. We are not after a concept that only clumps *utang-na-loób* with obviously dissimilar things such as college education or a nice house. We are after a concept that will combine these specific Filipino concepts with each other while at the same time differentiate them from other irrelevant values. In other words we need a narrower "group definition" than values.

It is interesting that Enriquez himself, the founder of Filipino psychology, did not try to explain what a value is.¹³ This would have been crucial if he wanted to distinguish what actually made the concepts he chose as Filipino values (*kapwa*, *utang-na-loób*, *hiya*, etc.) conceptually distinct from other equally legitimate Filipino values (family, respect, fear of God etc.). It is not enough to say that his list is different because they are "indigenous," for one can simply translate the latter group into their Filipino counterparts (*pamilya*, *paggalang*, *maka-Diyos*, etc.). Indeed, Clemente et al. have tried to insert the two values *maka-Diyos* (God-fearing) and *paggalang* (respect, especially towards elders) into the list of Enriquez because the people they surveyed recommended it (Clemente et al. 2008). All that is required to modify Enriquez's list is for a sizeable number of Filipinos to say that they value a particular thing, with theoretically no bounds to what can be included. As to what all these items have in common, or how they are interrelated to each other, that issue is left unresolved. Their only common connection is that they are "values."

Because of the extremely wide scope of "value" and the fact that it is practically synonymous with the words "good" or "important," value is unable to conceptually differentiate the Filipino concepts we want to analyze as a group (*loób*, *kapwa*, *kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób*, *hiya*, *lakas-ng-loób*, *bahala na*, etc.) from so many other Filipino values. One reason why Thomist virtue ethics is such an

¹² From here Timbreza proceeds to enumerate his own list of Filipino values which he admits is "arbitrary" and not definitive (Timbreza 2003, 17).

¹³ "Nowhere in Enriquez's works did he elaborate on the values construct. For example, though he conceptually defined each of his 12 values, he did not explicitly define – both conceptually and operationally – what a value is in the first place" (Clemente et al. 2008, 4).

attractive option is that it can do precisely that—circumscribe this whole group as a virtue ethics and then afterwards internally define concepts not in isolation from each other but in relation to each other as an integrated whole. This will be discussed further in the next section (1.4.3).

The situation is also complicated by the fact that according to Kluckhohn, values can also be *implicit*, meaning that the persons themselves who possess these values might not really be able to identify them. This of course makes it difficult to gain fidelity in identifying values because supposedly it should be the subject who is the most authoritative in stating what one considers important. However, what if the requisite consciousness about one's own values is never gained? Then the identification of values seems to depend on the scholars who present their subjects with predetermined lists and programmed surveys, and who already have their own presuppositions about what counts and does not count as value.¹⁴

Finally, values, being evaluations, can easily change. What one desires today can be very different from what one wants tomorrow. When it comes to societal values it can be about the fickle and changing attitudes, fads and fashions, of the majority. A generation of brainwashing can easily transform values, since it is about what people want. Virtues, as I will show, are more resilient because they can be anchored on the criteria of past generations (even centuries in the past) which admonish successive and future generations to behave in a particular way. Another way of saying this is that value is what people find good, but a virtue defines what good *is*. The first is descriptive, almost relativistic, the second is normative. The first is easier to change while the second can stand firm throughout time. Indeed, as I will show, virtues better describe the set of Filipino ethical/moral concepts that previous scholars have labeled Filipino “values.”

I allow that Filipino scholars can still improve their use of “value” in order to account for all the shortcomings just mentioned. Clemente et al. hope that more links could be made between Filipino values and “established value systems” such as Schwarz and Bilsky’s (Clemente et al. 2008, 29). This, in addition to original modifications by Filipino scholars, could further develop the conceptual infrastructure of value so that it can better describe Filipino ethical concepts. However, I suggest that one does not need to wait for this conceptual infrastructure to be developed since virtue ethics, as it was conceived by Aristotle and further developed by Aquinas, already provides the sophisticated resources that can effectively deal with Filipino ethical concepts. This will be treated in the following section (1.4.3).

The second problem with “value” is that the term is foreign and anachronistic to Filipino culture itself. This can be shown on two levels, linguistic and philosophical. Linguistically speaking, there is no indigenous word that plays the same role as

¹⁴ Take for example, the famous 36 values listed by Rokeach for his Rokeach Value Survey (1973).

“value” does from 20th century psychology, that is, an evaluative in the form of a noun. Miranda will suggest the word *buti*, which is quite revealing, since *buti* is more directly and literally translated as “good” (Miranda 1992). This only reinforces our previous point that “value” is practically synonymous with “good.” Jocano has used the words *halaga* and *pamantayan* (Jocano 1997). The word *halaga* is an interesting linguistic move, since it is a backward translation, that is, it forces a Filipino word to conform to the use of an English word, with the purpose, ironically, of interpreting a Filipino phenomenon. The Filipino word *halaga* still heavily connotes value in terms of price and cost. According to Juan Francisco it has its roots in native trade dealings, and is derived from the Sanskrit word *argha*, meaning the worth or price of goods (Francisco 1964, 42). The adjective derived from this word is *mahalaga*, which means that something is important or valuable. But Filipinos do not use the noun *halaga* in the same way as the noun “value.” This is introducing a brand new use of the word *halaga*. Every culture appraises the price and worth of things, an activity that is as old as trade and barter, but not every culture considers the appraisal *itself* a thing—that is, an abstract conception. As de Mesa states, “ordinarily, Filipinos do not speak of ‘values’ (*mga pinahahalagahan*) in the native tongue. It would be possible, but certainly not common to talk about things that Filipinos value...” (de Mesa 1987, 38) In other words the way the word “value” is being used in “Filipino value” does not find a direct counterpart in the Filipino language itself. The same goes for Jocano’s *pamantayan*, which is more obvious in forcing a Filipino word to unnaturally play the role of the English word “value.” *Pamantayan* comes closer to the word “standard.”

I am not completely against expanding the meaning of words in the native language to accommodate new ideas. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. But I suggest that rather than force words like *halaga* to learn a new trick, so to speak, there is already promising alternative in the indigenous word *loób* which provides the base for a Filipino virtue ethics. Whereas “value” does not have a natural Filipino counterpart, “virtue” has a natural Filipino counterpart in the concept of *loób*. This will become clearer later (chapter 3). It is better to let Western concepts bend and conform to indigenous concepts rather than the other way around, especially if we want to be faithful in explaining Filipino concepts.

The foreignness and anachronism is not just linguistic it is also philosophical. Manuel Dy is wrong when he says that “A Filipino ethics must first and foremost be an axiological ethics, an ethics of values.” (Dy 1994a, 19) He begins with Max Scheler and calls values the objects of our intentional feelings.

The first thing to be said about values is that they are objects of our intentional feeling.... We “know” values by feeling them, they do not wait for our rational justification in order to appear in our lives. Our intellect is blind to values just as the eyes are blind to sounds. (Dy 1994b, 9-10)

The use of Scheler is attractive because it provides a philosophical framework for the whole terminology of values. However one must remember that Scheler, an

early phenomenologist, was someone who was working under the shadow of Descartes and Kant. In particular he strove to solve the Kantian dichotomy between *noumena* and *phenomena*, the things as they are and the things as they appear to us. According to Kant we can only access *phenomena* and we can never access the *noumena*. This philosophical schism is grounded on the dichotomy of mind and body, subjectivity and objectivity, that was introduced by Descartes. Scheler was hoping that his ethics of “values” would enable us to encounter things as they really are, and yet it only shows that he was trying to get outside the cage created by the Cartesian and Kantian traditions.

Considered on its own Scheler’s philosophy has many merits, and I certainly do not intend to dissuade people from studying Scheler (or Descartes and Kant) if they want. The problem is when it is used to explain Filipino concepts. Many Filipino concepts are pre-modern. They are products of the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition. They do not have anything to do with the subjective-objective dichotomy which was inaugurated by Descartes and modern philosophy. I will explain this further when I talk about the intellectual history of the Philippines. To use any philosophical or theoretical framework that takes the subjective-objective divide for granted (a modern framework) will pervert the understanding of concepts that do not take it for granted (a pre-modern framework). As Miranda says, “value exists in the tension between objectivity and subjectivity, between existence in the world and existence in the human mind.” (Miranda 1992, 235) But concepts such as *loób* and *kapwa* were born and produced in a time and place when there was no tension between objectivity and subjectivity, between the world and the human mind. Does it then make sense to call *kapwa* and the various forms of *loób* “values?”

To use a modern theory to interpret these Filipino concepts is similar to using Newtonian physics to talk about Aristotelian “matter.” The word “matter” means something very different in Newton and Aristotle. For Newton it is something physical (an extended physical object); for Aristotle it is something metaphysical (the principle of identity through change). But to insist on using Newton’s understanding of matter while reading Aristotle’s physics will lead to profound confusion, and perhaps a thorough disappointment with Aristotle. An analogous mistake has been perpetrated with regard to Filipino virtues. Scheler, among other modern philosophers, is not the best option to use when studying them.

Dy’s claim that “a Filipino ethics must first and foremost be an axiological ethics, an ethics of values” (Dy 1994a, 19) is a strong claim and one that can continue to lead to disappointing results. It is also not trivial because Dy is currently a consultant for the ongoing K-12 Program *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (Education in Humanization) (Kagawaran ng Edukasyon 2013). Tens of thousands of Filipino students have been inducted into a “values education” that is grounded on a weak concept of “value.” I am hoping that this can eventually change.

However, as also was the case with Lynch, we cannot completely fault Dy and other scholars for latching on to the term “value” because for the longest time it was the only term available. The term “virtue” was something of a forgotten byword even in philosophy, how much more in the social sciences. Virtue ethics had to wait for Alasdair MacIntyre’s *After Virtue* (1981) and a new generation of virtue ethicists to regain respectability. Also in general Aquinas was given a negative reputation in the Philippines brought about on both sides by the anti-Spanish resentment propagated by the Americans, or anti-traditionalist strains within the Catholic Church itself. So he was generally dismissed except in traditional strongholds. It is enough to say that the pioneering Filipino scholars like Dy did the best they could with what they had, and that we owe them a debt of gratitude (*utang-na-loób*) for stretching the boundaries of this field of research.

1.4.3 The philosophical advantage of “virtues”

An interesting point is that virtue (*aretē*) in the original Greek, from the time of Homer, simply meant “excellence.” In that sense it also began as a concept as semantically wide as value. However, Aristotle’s innovation in his *Nicomachean Ethics* was to connect this excellence for human beings with other concepts such as happiness (*eudaimonia*) and the doctrine of the mean. His discussion was in turn supported by his metaphysics and psychology (Irwin, 1980). This made Aristotle’s concept of virtue more elaborate than earlier conceptions of virtue. Virtue in Aristotle describes the excellence of a thing’s function (*ergon*) (i.e. the excellence of a knife depends on how effectively it can cut things or how effectively a stringed musical instrument can produce sound). “Aristotle takes it as a starting-point for ethical enquiry that the relationship of ‘man’ to ‘living well’ is analogous to that of ‘harpist’ to ‘playing the harp well’ (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a 16)” (MacIntyre 1985, 58). Ethics is the study of how to develop one’s human nature and achieve human excellence.

Its basic structure is that which Aristotle analyzed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Within that teleological scheme there is a fundamental contrast between man-as-he-happens-to-be and man-as-he-could-be-if-he-realized-his-essential-nature. Ethics is the science which is to enable men to understand how they make the transition from the former state to the latter. Ethics therefore in this view presupposes some account of potentiality and act, some account of the essence of man as a rational animal and above all some account of the human *telos*. The precepts which enjoin the various virtues and prohibit the vices which are their counterparts instruct us how to move from potentiality to act, how to realize our true nature and to reach our true end. (MacIntyre 1985, 52)

Interestingly, the idea of four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, courage) is not to be found in Aristotle, whose organization of the virtues is more lax but in Plato, and then echoed by thinkers such as Cicero and Ambrose.¹⁵ Aquinas’ great achievement was to take practically all the thinkers on virtue ethics that came

¹⁵ For a comprehensive survey see the introduction by R. E. Houser in *The Cardinal Virtues* (2004).

before him and synthesize them into one great whole. “Aquinas developed a virtue theory more elaborate in its details than anything found in the ancient authors or in earlier medieval authors” (Houser 2004, 66). In addition to everyone already mentioned, Aquinas also drew from the New Testament, Pseudo-Dionysius, Philip the Chancellor, and Albert the Great. His masterpiece on virtue ethics is the *Secunda Secundae*¹⁶, the longest part of the *Summa Theologiae*. Here he organized all the virtues according to the seven principal virtues; three theological virtues from the Christian tradition (faith, hope, and love), and four cardinal virtues from the Greco-Roman tradition (prudence, justice, temperance, courage). All other virtues could be subsumed under these principal ones.

For Aquinas virtue is an operative habit (*habitus operativus*) in a power of the soul (*potentia animae*) which produces good works (*boni operativus*).¹⁷ In simpler terms virtue is the kind of person you are revealed in the way you regularly act, assessed through an established set of criteria. A man who consistently does good or virtuous actions is called a good or virtuous man. A man who consistently does evil or vicious actions is called an evil or vicious man. What is of importance is the objective quality of the person which can be determined from certain standards of behavior, rather than about what the person subjectively wants or deems important (as is the case with “value”). Of course even Kluckhohn imagined value as something that would also influence action, however the problem with value is that it is mostly subjective. Virtue is more objective than value in that a collection of virtues is supposed to live within a long-standing collective tradition that is anchored in the past generations of that tradition. The interpretation and understanding of those virtues compel and encourage the succeeding generations to pursue those virtues as ideals. They can modify and transform those collection of virtues but only slowly, through the internal debate and correction of members within the tradition. Just as the conception of justice (*dikē*) or temperance (*sôphrosunē*) changed from the Homeric age to the Classical Age of the Greeks, and further towards the Christianized Medieval age. In such a scheme one can be called good or bad, right or wrong, a success or a failure, judged by the virtues that are set as the ideal standard for the group. It is an ethics, a standard for morality. The vocabulary of good and bad, right or wrong, is not something that is usually encountered with values, since values are mostly about preference and not about moral standards.

If almost anything can be considered a “value,” the collection of virtues on the other hand is more narrow and specialized. All “virtues” can potentially be considered “values” or expressions of values but not all “values” can be called “virtues,” i.e., not all values are expressed in terms of virtues. Though justice may be considered a virtue and a value at the same time, we would not consider “a nice home” to be a virtue but only a value. In the language of Aquinas, a virtue (or vice) is

¹⁶ The second half of the second part of the *Summa Theologiae*.

¹⁷ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 55, a. 3.

a habit that is specific to a rational human being. It cannot be just any object that is perceived by the mind as good.

There is justification in advocating for a Filipino virtue ethics because the Filipino language contains a word which, one can say, contains an entire virtue ethics within it: the concept of *loób*. The *loób* is the “holistic and relational will” of a person. It is the proper subject of the Filipino virtues, which renders it the most often recurring term for compound virtue words.¹⁸ Consider some of the primary virtues included in this dissertation: *kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób*, and *lakas-ng-loób*. All of these describe something positive about the *loób*. Some compound words of *loób* such as *masamang-loób* and *mahinang-loób* conversely describe a negative property of the *loób*. Just as Aquinas described virtue as a habit of a power of the soul, such as the reason or the will, we can also describe the Filipino virtues as a habit of the *loób*. I will talk more about *loób* later (chapter 3) and use this grammatical point as one evidence for a Filipino virtue ethics (section 3.1.3). For now it is enough to state that *loób* in its various forms is the indigenous counterpart to Western virtue.¹⁹

¹⁸ As Dionisio Miranda says: “*Loob* is a Filipino term rich in many meanings, as found in its various cognates or derivatives. Consider, for example, these terms: *looban*, *kalooban*, *pagloloob*, *panloloob*, *pinaglooban*, *pinakaloob*, *kaloob-looban*, *kaloob*, *loobin*, *pagbabalik-loob*, *kusang-loob*, *kapalagayang-loob*, *lamang-loob*, *kabutihan-loob*, *kasamaang-loob*, *utang na loob*, *buong-loob*, *tamang-loob*, *maling-loob*, *malakas ang loob*, *mahina ang loob*, *maruming loob*, *malinis na loob*, *maliit na loob*, *malaking loob*, *sirang-loob*, *maayos na loob*, *panloob*, etc. Because of this there is more than a little truth to the observation that *loob* is initially best described rather than defined” (Miranda 1989, 1).

Consider also the compiled list of Leonardo Mercado, which enumerates many of the uses of *loob*, divided into five categories (Mercado 1976, 55-64):

1. **Intellectual:** *Isaloob*, *Pagkaloob*, *Loob* (mind), *Mapasaloob*, *Saloobin*, *Salooban*
2. **Emotional:** *Magbabagong-loob*, *Matigas ang loob*, *Buo ang loob*, *Sumigla ang loob*, *Buhay ang loob*, *Laki ng loob*, *Pukawin ang loob*, *Kabuhusan ng loob*, *Mabagabag ang loob*, *Mainit ang loob*, *Nasa loob*, *Maglihim ng nasa loob*, *Mababa ang loob*, *Masama ang loob*, *Masakit ang loob*
3. **Volitional:** *Loob*, *Loob* (mood), *Loobin* (allow), *Kusang-loob*, *Mula sa loob*, *Kalooban* (will)
4. **Ethical:** *Loob* (tapang), *Pagkalooban*, *Kaloob*, *Nagakaloob*, *Utang na loob*, *Ganting-loob*, *Sa tanang loob*, *May loob*, *Walang loob*, *Mababang loob*, *Magandang loob*, *Gawang-loob*, *Bigay-loob*, *Tanging-loob*, *Balik-loob*
5. **Others:** *Loob* (ng bahay), *Paloob*, *Looban*, *Kaloob-looban*, *Manloob/Nilooban*, *Masamang-loob*

An even more extensive list than these first two, complete with dictionary definitions, can be found in an appendix of Albert Alejo’s *Tao Po! Tuloy!* (1990, 135-151), entitled *Kayaman ng Loob* (Riches of Loob). He lists a total of 287 word-variants of *loób* obtained from old and new dictionaries, the social sciences, theology and spirituality, native proverbs, his experiences in counseling, and ordinary conversations.

¹⁹ The word “*birtud*” has also been borrowed from the Spanish, and has become part of the Filipino vocabulary, but more frequently it was used to designate the magical or supernatural powers of a person, using charms and folk rituals. As Dionisio Miranda says: “An exact Tagalog equivalent for the term “virtue” is not readily available. The Spanish terms appropriated in the culture (*birtud*, *birtuoso*) have been assigned quite disparate meanings. *Birtud* refers more to the meaning of power associated with magic. *Birtuoso*, on the other hand, is associated with a certain skillfulness, often in an artistic or aesthetic sense” (Miranda 1987, 6).

However, more recent Filipino philosophical literature has used the word “*birtud*” in the context of virtue ethics, such as de Castro in his *Etika at Pilosopiya sa Kontekstong Pilipino* (de Castro 1995b). I find this completely valid, but if one wants a purely indigenous term, I suggest that the word *loób* and its various forms will suffice.

The *loób* is not supposed to be an abstract concept as much as it is the concrete behavior of the person. It is discovered through a relationship with another person, not so much in an objective or professional manner, *qua* scientist or academic, but as a normal human being without a “façade.” The kind of *loób* a person has can be understood by asking his friends, family, and workmates, “what kind of person is he really?” *Loób* is manifested mostly through the summation of one’s behavior towards other people in the various situations of daily life. The point is the “holistic” and “relational” aspect of *loób*. *Loób* is holistic because one should not isolate only the intellectual or emotional component of the relationship. *Loób* is relational because it cannot be studied apart from its relationship with *kapwa*.

This “holistic” and “relational” aspect of *loób* is partly why the Filipino psychology movement sought to escape the confines of modern psychology, especially the behaviorism of B. F. Skinner. Skinner sought to understand human beings as experimental subjects. The Filipino psychologists were compelled instead to explore indigenous techniques such as *pakapa-kapa* (literally, “groping”) or *pagtanong-tanong* (“asking questions”), which eschewed rigid academic theories and sought to interact with the person in a more warm and humane manner, using natural *pakikiramdam* or social sensitivity (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000, 59-60). While it would not nowadays be considered as conforming to the norm of “empirical research,” it is more faithful to how *loób* and *kapwa* is revealed only by treating the other person as a full person (and not just a guinea pig or test subject) but within the context of a genuine relationship.

One can form a neat correspondence between the principal virtues of Aquinas and some Filipino virtues. This provides an organizing principle that was lacking in the arbitrary schemes of those who promoted Filipino values. In the fourth and last chapter of the dissertation I will pair five virtues from each side.

Love (*Caritas*) \leftrightarrow *Kagandahang-Loób*

Prudence (*Prudentia*) \leftrightarrow *Pakikiramdam*

Justice (*Justitia*) \leftrightarrow *Utang-na-Loób*

Temperance (*Temperantia*) \leftrightarrow *Hiya*

Courage/Fortitude (*Fortitudo*) \leftrightarrow *Lakas-ng-Loób*

I choose only five and leave out the other two theological virtues of Aquinas faith (*fides*) and hope (*spes*) because including them felt a bit contrived. These five fit in more naturally because all the five Filipino virtues here are fairly common in daily dealings and the language. They are verifiably part of the form of life of Filipino culture. Also, these five have a decent amount of scholarship attached to them,

meaning they have been considered worthy of study and investigation. For example, all of them are part of the list of Filipino values of Clemente et al. (2008, 3) which is in turn adapted from the list of Enriquez (1992, 93). Finally, the Filipino counterparts of *fides* and *spes* (*pananampalataya* and *pag-asa*) are not so very different from their Western counterparts, so including them would be redundant. On the other hand, these five pairs simultaneously highlight both similarities and differences.

Aquinas conceived of his virtue ethics as a unified whole, with all the virtues connected and contributing to the overall development of the human soul. This holistic model has unfortunately not been applied in the understanding of Filipino virtues. Many of the Filipino virtues such as *utang-na-loób* or *hiya*, formerly called “values,” have been studied in isolation. This has led to a deficient understanding. For example, one cannot truly understand *utang-na-loób* when it is not paired with *kagandahang-loób*. This is because *kagandahang-loób*—generously doing a good to someone and not asking for anything in return—is the “first move” which is supposed to incite in the other person *utang-na-loób* that repays the debt with interest. *Bahala na* taken in isolation can be considered irresponsibility or a “whatever”/“who cares” attitude. But it is only when it is situated within sacrifice for the *kapwa* that it shows its nobler moral characteristics. The Filipino virtues should be understood as a whole, a harmonious system with a single goal or *telos*: oneness and unity with the *kapwa*. They should not be studied in isolation. Aquinas has set a powerful example for the interconnected treatment of the virtues.

The way that virtues can be grouped together as positive habits of the *loób* (thereby differentiating them from other Filipino values), and how they can have functional connections with each other based on the goal of unity (*pagkakaisa*) with the *kapwa*, makes virtue ethics a much more attractive theoretical framework than values for dealing with Filipino ethical concepts. Filipino scholars need not reinvent the wheel, so to speak. There is already an ethical theory available that can do what they were hoping values would do, but unfortunately could not.

Like I said previously, I have called this dissertation *a* Filipino virtue ethics, and not *the* Filipino virtue ethics, since the words introduced here are derived from Tagalog language and culture, primarily in the Northern island of Luzon and in the capital of Manila. If any investigation of Filipino virtue ethics is to be undertaken this would be the reasonable first step, not only because the national Filipino language is almost completely based on the Tagalog language and it has the most number of native speakers, but also because the Tagalog culture has been the most thoroughly Hispanicized during the 300 years of Spanish occupation and shows the most thorough synthesis of the two traditions. One can also argue for a greater influence of the American tradition on Tagalog culture than on others. If synthesis rather than purity is the mindset, then Tagalog offers the primary example.

After a study of Tagalog virtue ethics however, one can investigate the similarities with other regional groups in the Philippines. For example, Mercado has identified the counterparts of the Tagalog *loób* in other Philippine languages, specifically the Ilokano *nakem* and the Bisayan *buot* (Mercado 1976, 54). I would also add the Bikolano “*boot*.” Mercado recommended “that the counterparts of *loob* in other Philippine languages be studied in order to have a true Filipino view” (Mercado, 1994, 37). The development of this Tagalog virtue ethics should provide a good base for the comparative study of other regional virtue ethics. There would exist a cumulative benefit for articulating one for the sake of the others. So to repeat, we call this a “Filipino virtue ethics” with the qualification that it is likely not the only one. There is opportunity to study regional nuances in the future.

One last advantage of virtue over value is that it can move the discussion of these Filipino concepts to the global conversation on ethics. The presentation of “Filipino value” has connoted a kind of cultural relativism and has been a dead end insofar as genuine dialogue with those outside the Philippines is concerned. One merely presents what Filipinos value at an international conference, listens to what other cultures value, and that’s the end of it. But virtue ethics is a long-standing debate about what truly constitutes human flourishing. It considers moral standards such as good and evil, right and wrong. It treats not only what people want but what is genuinely good for them. In other words, the shift to virtue ethics allows Filipino scholars to avoid being locked in their own culture and gives them the possibility of contributing to a more universal and international conversation.

1.4.4 The international revival of virtue ethics

Alasdair MacIntyre recounted the general forgetting of virtue in the modern age and the sense of moral confusion that has pervaded ethical discourse. Some of the most dominant modern ethical theories have been the sentimentalism of David Hume, the utilitarianism of J.S. Mill and the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant. However there are also 20th century theories such as the expressivism of A. J. Ayer and the intuitionism of G. E. Moore (one can likely trace the influence of these two in modern values theory). MacIntyre points out how there has been a lack of consistency in ethical discourse, where proponents are liable to shift from a different set of ethical premises to another and constantly use words like “good” or “bad,” “right” and “wrong,” “moral” and “immoral” but with unstable and flexible meanings. So even though people might think that they understand each other when discoursing about morality, they may not necessarily be talking about the same things.

MacIntyre’s contribution was a recovery of virtue ethics beginning with his landmark work *After Virtue* (1981) which sparked a general revival of interest in virtue ethics. This work was followed by *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988), *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (1990), and *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999). He attributes the confusion of moral discourse to a forgetting of virtues and practices which are aligned to human flourishing, especially in the context of a

community. Virtues are anchored on what he calls “traditions,” but this does not translate to either a cultural or moral relativism because the biological vulnerabilities of human beings are more or less fixed. Traditions merely come closer or nearer to grasping those virtues that truly constitute the best human life based on our social and biological needs.

Prior to MacIntyre’s landmark contribution we can already identify a slow turn to virtue ethics. G. E. M. Anscombe’s article “Modern Moral Philosophy” (1958) questioned modern ethics which continued to use the language of legal obligation from divine authority (“morally ought,” “morally right”) while not retaining such a divine authority. Meanwhile her husband Peter Geach wrote a book entitled *The Virtues* (1969), a prolonged discussion of the cardinal virtues, an unusual topic for any analytic philosopher during that time. Two of Anscombe’s students, Philippa Foot and Rosalind Hursthouse also became prominent virtue ethicists. In Germany Josef Pieper’s work on the four cardinal virtues²⁰ and in France Servais Pinckaers’ *Les sources de la morale chrétienne* (1985) have also contributed to the general revival.²¹ Pinckaers in particular compares virtue ethics with the morality of obligation that has dominated Christian ethics since the counter-reformation. One can say that virtue ethics has made a decided comeback only in the late 20th century. But since then its influence has steadily increased. “The contemporary study of virtue is burgeoning; what only ten years ago was a cottage industry threatens to become an industrial giant” (Yearley 1990, 8).

Virtue ethics was practically a non-option in the 1960s and 1970s during the “discovery” of Filipino values. And so it is clearly not the fault of people like Lynch and Enriquez that they did not resort to virtue ethics in their work. Indeed, to this very day virtue ethics is secluded within philosophy and is yet to have a significant influence in the social sciences. However, if the advantages of virtue ethics can be conclusively shown then this situation can change at least in the Filipino context. There is ample room for Filipino virtue ethics to join in this recent revival in virtue ethics and contribute to an international conversation. Yearley, whose work on Aquinas and Mencius was previously mentioned, notes:

We live in a world where we often find radically diverse ideals of human flourishing. Some of these ideals differ as markedly from our own as do the ideals that appear in Mencius and Aquinas... We need a particular set of intellectual skills and virtues to do the comparative philosophy of human flourishings. (Yearley 1990, 203)

As will be shown in the rest of this dissertation Filipino virtue ethics indeed represents a different “ideal of human flourishing.” This work is an attempt at “comparative philosophy.” When Yearley compared Aquinas and Mencius he pointed

²⁰ Collected and translated as *The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance* (Pieper 1965).

²¹ Meanwhile in the US, Romanus Cessario (2009) is one of the more prominent advocates of Thomist virtue ethics following the direction of Pinckaers.

out that “conventional social rules are considerably more important to Mencius than to Aquinas... and familial relationships are less significant for Aquinas than for Mencius” (Yearley 1990, 170). Filipino virtue ethics at least in this regard represents something unique in between Mencius and Aquinas, combining an intense emphasis on family relationships on the one hand and a Catholic inheritance on the other.

2 Historical Context: The Three Intellectual Traditions in the Philippines

To properly understand Filipino virtue ethics, one first needs to be familiar with the unique history of the Philippines. The confluence of traditions in its history will explain how Filipino ethical concepts were born and also why they have been misinterpreted. Filipino (Tagalog) intellectual history is composed of three very distinct yet overlapping traditions: 1) the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition, 2) the Spanish Catholic tradition, and 3) the American modern tradition. I have added specific descriptors to the geographic source of each tradition to highlight what I consider its most relevant trait.

The reason why this chapter is important is because the raw material and conceptual content of Filipino virtue ethics comes from the syncretization of the first two traditions, the Southeast Asian and the Spanish traditions. However the theorization and scholarly research on these Filipino ethical concepts (studied as “values”) must be credited to the American tradition. An awareness of this tripartite historical arrangement is necessary for understanding both the uniqueness of Filipino ethical concepts based on the unusual combination of the first two traditions, and the confusion over these concepts based on misinterpretations by the third tradition.

There are also specific reasons to discuss each tradition in detail. For example, since there is no ancient canon or written text from the Southeast Asian tradition that describes the use of Filipino ethical concepts before the Spanish arrived (it was an oral tradition and what we know about early Filipino culture was written down by the Spanish themselves, cf. section 2.2.1), certain conjectures about the original nature of these ethical concepts can only be made on the basis of the cultural and historical context. When I claim that *loób* is “holistic and relational” in an animist sense or that *kapwa* was originally an exclusive tribal concept, these are claims that are based on the factual characteristics of the Southeast Asian tradition. A knowledge of the Southeast Asian tradition is therefore particularly important given the absence of written texts from the pre-Hispanic period.

The discussion of the Spanish Catholic tradition is particularly important to show how Filipino ethical concepts were modified or expanded by Christian doctrine. The decision of the Spanish missionaries not to teach the Spanish language but rather translate Christian doctrine into the native language was an important factor in this process. The history of Spanish colonization in the Philippines also shows that the Philippine intellectual situation until the end of the 19th century was in what one could call a “medieval time warp.” This justifies calling Filipino ethical concepts “pre-modern” and questioning modernist interpretations of Filipino ethical concepts.

Finally, the dominant presence of Thomism in the Spanish Catholic tradition in the Philippines also validates the use of Thomism as the prime dialogue partner for Filipino virtue ethics. Thomism is a “historical insider” in the Philippines’ own history. At the very least Thomism is a more natural choice over modern philosophical or psychological theories.

The discussion of the American modern tradition is important to understand the benefits of American education for the theorization of Filipino “values”; but at the same time, it helps to explain the present confusion brought about by using modern theories and assumptions to interpret Filipino ethical concepts. It also explains the current conflict between Filipino ethical concepts, which are relational and collective, and what I will call “exclusive individualism.” This “exclusive individualism” is what most Filipino scholars point to as the main antagonist against traditional Filipino “values” (section 2.3.2).

Understanding the aggressive political, cultural, and educational policies of the American modern tradition also helps to explain the current state of disarray, or the lack of synthesis, between the three traditions of the Philippines. The problem comes when one tradition is held to be the standard by which the other traditions should be judged (cf. section 2.3.3). In contrast, I would like to present Filipino virtue ethics as a contribution to the synthesis of the three traditions (section 2.4). In this sense, the project of articulating a Filipino virtue ethics falls in line with movements such as “inculturation” and “indigenization,” which seek some kind of reconciliation between traditions.

MacIntyre’s definition of “tradition” will be used here: “a tradition is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined...” (MacIntyre 1988, 12). It is a building upon the deposit of ideas and concepts found in the past, with a more or less consistent understanding about what those previous ideas should mean.

For it is central to the conception of such a tradition that the past is never something merely to be discarded, but rather that the present is intelligible only as a commentary upon and response to the past in which the past, if necessary and if possible, is corrected and transcended, yet corrected and transcended in a way that leaves the present open to being in turn corrected and transcended by some yet more adequate future point of view.... When a tradition is in good order, when progress is taking place, there is always a certain cumulative element to a tradition. (MacIntyre 1985, 146)

The notion of “tradition” need not be a very complex one in our discussion, since one can easily trace ideas to their historical and geographical source. For example, Protestantism and modern democracy clearly cannot be traced to either the Spanish tradition or the Southeast Asian tradition; it is clearly an American import. The philosophy of Aquinas can be clearly traced to the universities of Spain. The tribal *barangay* system, which comes from the word for a native boat, has its origins

in the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and is unknown in the Spanish and American traditions.

After long periods of time two traditions may mix or “syncretize.” Various elements of “folk Catholicism” perhaps present the best example. Catholic devotions such as brown scapulars and statues of the saints may simultaneously be authorized by the Catholic authorities and also treated as *anting-anting* or talismans in an animist vein by the local populace. The prevalence of this overlapping attitude has led the Filipino psychologist Jaime Bulatao to coin the phrase “split-level Christianity.”

Split-level Christianity may be described as the coexistence within the same person of two or more thought-and-behavior systems which are inconsistent with each other. The image is of two apartments at different levels, each of which contains a family, the one rarely talking to the other. So it is with the split-leveled person: At one level he professes allegiance to ideas, attitudes, and ways of behaving which are mainly borrowed from the Christian West; at another level he holds convictions which are more properly his “own” way of living and believing which were handed down from his ancestors, which do not always find their way into an explicit philosophical system but nevertheless now and then flow into action.²² (Bulatao 1992, 22)

I think the word “split-level” might not be the best choice because it gives the idea of a strict line of demarcation between traditions. I prefer to visualize them as intersecting circles in a Venn diagram rather than “split-levels.” They overlap at certain areas, and these areas represent the “syncretization” of concepts from two different traditions. By “syncretization,” I mean the incidental and haphazard coming together of concepts from different traditions. There is little or no deliberate, educated effort to reconcile traditions together. Syncretization often happens accidentally, through misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and ignorance. It largely involves ordinary people simply trying to make sense of two traditions in their daily lives; a measure of spontaneous invention and creativity is often at work. On the other hand, “inculturation” and “indigenization” are more deliberate and educated attempts at reconciling concepts from different traditions. It seeks to understand traditions faithfully on their own terms, before attempting a synthesis. I will talk more about “inculturation” and “indigenization” later (section 2.4).

²² Furthermore he says: “The upper level is a more explicitly verbalized system including the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Five Precepts of the Church, and a few things about the Mass and the sacraments. The lower level is that which has been deposited by life itself, early-life conditionings, relationships, traditional myths, and belief systems handed down from the grandfather to the grandson. This is the culture which nourishes the consciousness of the child from the first years of his extrauterine life as a kangaroo nourishes its offspring in its pouch.

Thus did the two levels maintain their coexistence for the three hundred years of Spanish rule. With the coming of the Americans at the turn of the century and as the influence of the Spanish friar declined, a new set of concepts came to fill in the gaps of the upper level. Thus democracy and science took their uneasy places on the upper level of the nation’s consciousness (and it took the imposition of martial law to show how weak indeed and how precarious the hold of concept and ideology in men’s lives could be when compared to semiverbalized, and hence all the more powerful, forces of man’s *kalooban*, the inner self)” (Bulatao 1992, 64).

For the purpose of understanding the historical context of the three traditions, I have prepared Table 1 that outlines relevant periods in the history of the Philippines. I will refer to them as I go along. Given the chronology of events, it is tempting to delineate “end” points for traditions, to say, for example, that the Southeast Asian tradition “ended” in 1565 when the Spanish arrived or that the Spanish tradition “ended” in 1898 when they lost control of the Philippines. I argue that the older tradition lives on with the new tradition so that it would be better to speak of *overlapping* traditions rather than perfectly sequential ones. By the time the 20th century comes along, we have three active traditions overlapping with one another.

[Table 1. Historical timeline relevant to the three traditions in the Philippines]

Start of the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition	
890-710 B. C.	Estimated period of the Manunggul Jar, an artifact that represented the animist beliefs of the Philippine inhabitants which lasted for centuries.
900 A.D.	Period of the Laguna Copperplate Inscription, with its Sanskrit loan words, which showed heavy Indian and Javanese influence in the Islands.
1380 A. D.	Karim ul-Makhdum, an Arab trader, brought Islam to the Philippines. The Maranao epic Darangen records their people’s initial resistance against Islam. Islam became the greatest foreign influence in the Islands, reaching as far as Luzon in the north.
March 17, 1521	Magellan arrived in the Philippine Islands. Killed by Lapu-Lapu in the island of Mactan.
1542	The expeditionary commander Ruy López de Villalobos gave the name “Philippines” to the islands, in honor of the young prince Philip II.
Start of the Spanish Catholic tradition	
April 27, 1565	King Philip II appointed Miguel Lopez de Legazpi as the first governor general of the Philippines, signaling the start of Spanish colonial rule.
1570-1571	The Spanish conquest of Manila and the Pasig river by de Legazpi, against the three rulers Lakan Dula, Rajah Matanda, and Rajah Sulayman III. Manila then served as the capital of Spanish rule.
1593	<i>Doctrina Christiana</i> , the first book published in the Philippines, in Tagalog translation, representing missionary endeavors.
April 28, 1611	The founding of the University of Santo Tomas (UST), modeled after the University of Salamanca in Spain.
1613	Publication of the first Tagalog dictionary <i>Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala</i> by Pedro de San Buena Ventura.
1700-1768	The Golden Age of the Church in the Philippines (cf. Schumacher), ending with the expulsion of the Jesuits.
1754	Publication of <i>Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala</i> by Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar, with second (1832) and third (1860)

	editions.
1789-1799	The French Revolution in Europe. Further decline of Spain.
1814	The highly popular and influential <i>Pasyon Pilapil</i> , building on the earlier <i>Pasyon</i> by Gaspar Aquino de Belen (1703).
1832-1841	Apolinario de la Cruz founded the <i>Cofradia de San Jose</i> , which was crushed by the Spanish authorities. Set a pattern for future groups.
1838	Publication of <i>Florante at Laura</i> by Francisco Baltazar. Tagalog masterpiece.
1864	<i>Estudios sobre la filosofia de Santo Tomas</i> by Spanish priest Zeferino Gonzales was published by UST, Manila. Representative of Neothomist revival.
February 17, 1872	Filipino priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora (Gomburza) were executed. Filipino consciousness of self-identity awakened.
August 1879	Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical <i>Aeterni Patris</i> , leading to a worldwide Thomist revival.
December 30, 1896	Jose Rizal, author of <i>Noli Me Tangere</i> and <i>El Filibusterismo</i> , and eventually hailed as <i>pambansang bayani</i> or national hero, was executed by firing squad.
June 12, 1898	Filipino declaration of independence from Spain led by General Emilio Aguinaldo.
Start of the American modern tradition	
December 10, 1898	Treaty of Paris. Spain ceded the Philippines (along with Cuba, Guam, and other territories) to the United States for \$20 million.
1898-1902	The Filipino-American war.
July 4, 1946	The United States officially granted Philippine independence, however, significant political influence continued.
1962-1965	Vatican II. Opened the doors for missionary “inculturation.”
1961	Publication of <i>Four Readings on Filipino Values</i> edited by Frank Lynch, until its fourth edition (1973).
1976	<i>Elements of Filipino Philosophy</i> by Leonardo Mercado was published.
February 1986	EDSA People Power Revolution. Instigated by the assassination of Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr. on August 21, 1983. Symbolic of <i>pagkakaisa</i> (unity).
November 24, 1992	Subic Military Bases closed and evacuated by US Personnel.
January 2001	EDSA People Power II, which led to the deposition of President Joseph Estrada and the instatement of Vice President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and a counter EDSA People Power III in April 2001, which was unsuccessful in ousting Arroyo and reinstating Estrada. Both acknowledged as lesser versions of the first People Power.

2.1 The Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition

Despite competing theories about how the first peoples arrived in the Philippines, there is solid archeological evidence of human presence in the islands as early as 22,000 years ago (Agoncillo 1990, 21; Jocano 1998a, 107). One of the most important pre-historic artifacts is the Manunggul Jar, dated 890-710 B.C. and found in the island of Palawan (Ronquillo 2003, 37). It depicts two men on a boat journeying to the afterlife, and is a perfect symbol of early animist beliefs and seafaring ways. The tribes that the Spanish encountered in the coastal areas were organized in units called the *barangay*, named after *balangay*, the kind of boat that was used by the first groups of settlers to arrive in the Philippines (Scott 1994, 4-5; Agoncillo 1990, 40). Each *barangay* consisted of around 30 to 100 families and was ruled by a *datu* or chieftain. They were a river and sea-faring people with trade dealings with the mountain tribes further inland and other coastal settlements. They also had an animist religion with rituals led by the *babaylan* or priestess class. The *babaylan* served both as bridges to the divine world and as the prime culture bearers of tribal society (Salazar 1999, 6).

There are traces of Indian, Chinese and an Islamic influence in the pre-Hispanic Philippines (Agoncillo 1990, 24-30; Jocano 138-152). The Laguna Copperplate Inscription with its Sanskrit words shows that there was Indian influence since 900 A.D. (Postma 1992). This is confirmed also by the numerous Sanskrit loan words in the Tagalog language (Francisco 1964; Agoncillo 1990, 30-31).²³ Manila was also a favorite destination for Chinese traders who eventually formed a thriving community (cf. Amyot 1973). In the 13th and 14th centuries Muslim traders and missionaries arrived in the southern islands of the Philippines and spread Islam (Majul 1973, 63). By the time Legazpi arrived some natives like Rajah Sulayman in the north were already beginning to embrace Islam (72-75). It is almost a certainty that had the Spanish not arrived, the Philippines would have become like its Islamic neighbors Indonesia and Malaysia, or even annexed to those countries (cf. 76). The Islamic tradition in the South was not conquered by the Spanish and survived until the present day, though under very challenging political circumstances (cf. McKenna 1998). It represents a different and older history and conflux of traditions: the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Islamic tradition.²⁴

Although pre-Hispanic Philippines had streaks of these foreign traditions, the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition was clearly distinguishable on its own.²⁵

²³ For example, Tagalog *diwa* (essence) from Sanskrit *jīwa* (living, alive); Tagalog *diwata* (spirits, goddesses, nymphs) from Sanskrit *devata* (divine beings, divinity); Tagalog *budhi* (conscience) from Sanskrit *buddhi* (understanding, mind); Tagalog *guro* (teacher) from Sanskrit *guru* (spiritual teacher).

²⁴ Some examples of ancient rituals of the inhabitants of Maguindanao that are either being integrated into Islam or forgotten are discussed in "Foreign Influences on Muslim Rituals" (Loyre 1998, 431-443).

²⁵ Joaquin is actually of the opinion that pre-Hispanic culture in the Philippines was most similar to the Pacific Islanders than to any other country in Asia: "If we are to identify the pre-Hispanic Filipino with a cultural geography, this is the world to which he belonged: the pagan world of the South Seas... Our true relatives are the Polynesians" (Joaquin 2004, 403).

The two elements that I want to highlight in the Southeast Asian tradition is tribalism and animism. Tribalism is especially important for our understanding of *kapwa* since one can reasonably speculate that *kapwa* was originally used only within the tribe. Someone who was of another tribe was not considered as *kapwa*. Also, part of the emphasis on family, clan, and ritual kinship ties also comes from tribal culture, as most members of a tribe would be blood-related or ritually-related in some way. The whole family and tribal mentality seeks the survival and flourishing of the group rather than the good of individuals and is something that heavily influences the relational dynamics of the Filipino virtues.

Animism meanwhile is important for the understanding of *loób*. Animism emphasizes the supernatural interconnectedness of things. The animist does not yet make a strict separation between self and the world of phenomena. Barfield calls this “original participation.”

The represented is felt to be on the other side of the phenomena from the perceiving self. At the same time, it is felt to be linked with, or related to, that self otherwise than through the senses. The self, so far as there yet is one, is still aware that it and the phenomena derive from the same supersensible source. (Barfield 1988, 122-123)

The concept of *loób* is not to be seen then as severed from the world but woven into it, and this gives us our justification for calling *loób* a holistic and relational will because it is not divided in itself nor separated from everything around it like the *res cogitans* and *res extensa* of Descartes. Benedict Anderson has described the concept of power in Javanese culture as an “intangible, mysterious, and divine energy which animates the universe” (Anderson 1972, 7). Reynaldo Ileto has drawn parallels with this and the notion of *loób* (Ileto 1979, 32).

The Southeast Asian tradition was definitely not perfect by modern-day moral standards. Head-hunting was a common practice for some tribes (Scott 1994, 251). Slave-raiding, the practice of invading another *barangay* and turning the vanquished into slaves, were also a regular practice (Scott 1994, 151-155). There was also the use of human sacrifice for religious rituals, a practice which though suppressed, may have persisted clandestinely into the 20th century (McCoy 1982, 152-153). These are practices which no one, not even enthusiasts about indigenous Filipino culture, would probably want to defend today.

However being an oral and myth-based society affords the scholar a unique glimpse into “primitive” societies and worldviews. Such societies contain certain attitudes towards the world which have almost been forgotten in the West. Whereas Western culture can only vaguely imagine what “pre-Homeric” and “pre-philosophical” society was like several millennia ago, in Filipino culture it still lives on as an undercurrent in the ordinary life of most Filipinos, or as something still very concrete in many tribes and ethnic groups which have survived into the 21st century. The raw features of the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition can still be

encountered in the tribes which were not conquered by the Spanish nor touched by Muslim influence, for example the Igorot tribes of the Cordillera Mountains.²⁶

2.1.1 Tribalism

The pre-Hispanic form of tribalism was usually the *barangay*, a *datu* ruling over several families, with blood and kinship relations solidifying the tribe. However this was not a uniform system throughout the archipelago. “Filipinos living in the unhispanized Philippines do not share one and the same social structure” (Scott 1982, 128). Scott lists four different kinds of pre-Hispanic societies, with only the largest one properly counting as *barangay*.²⁷ This is understandable given the great differences in natural resources, territory, and technology that tribes possessed. Certain mountain tribes which relied on hunting and scavenging to survive from day to day were more classless and egalitarian than the trading peoples of the coasts who could accumulate luxury and wealth. Also, though the Spanish accounts tended to interpret the social hierarchy of the *barangay* through the lens of Spanish feudalism (king, nobles and peasants for the *datu*, *timawa*, *alipin/oripun*) Scott has shown that tribal society was much more fluid and flexible than its medieval counterpart (Scott 1982, 122-123). But it is not the details but the general characteristics of these societies that are most important to us. Scott says of the Visayan *barangay*:

The political units of this society are small—less than 1,000 persons at most—and are potentially hostile to one another unless related by blood, inter-marriage, trading partnerships, or subjugation through conquest. (Scott 1982, 123)

It is the first two, blood and inter-marriage, which afford the strongest bonds for these small tribes. The idea of blood kinship was paramount. In an environment rife with tribal warfare and slavery, not to mention the harsh natural conditions, survival could only mean the survival of the tribe. One cannot survive as a mere individual. This explains the importance given to “blood vengeance” by members of the tribe.

The key to understanding the phenomenon of blood vengeance is the high value tribal peoples put on solidarity and unity. If one member of the community is killed, any member of the death-dealing community can be made to pay the debt with his or her life, and it is incumbent on any member of the offended community to right the wrong. The obverse solidarity is also true: members of the offending community accept the fact that they too are “guilty.”...

²⁶ For a good introduction see the numerous works of Roy Barton such as *Ifugao Law* (1919), *The Half-Way Sun: Life among the Headhunters of the Philippines* (1930) and *The Kalingas: Their Institutions and Custom Law* (1949).

²⁷ “1. Classless societies—societies with no terms which distinguish one social class from another;
2. Warrior societies—societies with a recognized class distinguished by prowess in battle;
3. Petty plutocracies—societies with a recognized class characterized by inherited real property; and
4. Principalities—societies with a recognized ruling class with inherited rights to assume political office, or exercise central authority” (Scott 1982, 129).

The solidarity we are talking of here in turn is one that is based on kinship. Ties of family—of the extended family, that is—are the uniting force of tribal communities. Communities are strong where these ties are strong, weak where they are weak. Any assault on a member of the family/community is an assault on all precisely because it is an act against their integrity and solidarity as family/community. Justice, in the matter of blood vengeance, is thus not so much an affair of individuals as of the family group as a whole. (Claver 1992, 18)

The most important thing is the tribe, which is solidified and reinforced through the family and kinship relationships within its members. What is done unto one member is in a sense done unto all. The group has a single identity. In this dissertation I use the terms family, clan and tribe almost interchangeably. Because the preservation of the tribe is of utmost importance, a virtue like courage in this context is courage for the sake of the tribe's survival. "Courage is important, not simply as a quality of individuals, but as the quality necessary to sustain a household and a community" (MacIntyre 1985, 122). This fact will have significant consequences in our understanding of *lakas-ng-loób* and *bahala na* later, which should not be seen as individual courage but courage for the sake of others (section 4.6).

The emphasis on the family in contemporary Filipino culture can certainly trace its origin and starting point in the tribalism of the past.

The Filipinos show many of the characteristics found in traditional societies the world over. Each individual feels responsibilities to his relatives. Daily living is directed more by tradition and by face-to-face relationships than is the case in industrialized societies where contractual and impersonal relationships are more common... [We find] an emphasis on responsibilities to family members, widespread sharing of the results of successes or failures, and an emphasis on maintaining the goodwill of relatives and neighbors.²⁸ (Guthrie 1968, 54-55)

As Jocano also says, "The importance of the family in understanding contemporary [Filipino] behavior cannot be overemphasized" (Jocano 1998b, 62). This family and clan mentality was not seriously challenged during the Spanish period, in fact it was strengthened by the Spanish.

The content of pre-Hispanic kin relationships was perpetuated by the Spanish who placed a high value on solidarity and respect for parental authority. With the introduction of Catholicism, the Spanish brought the *compadrazgo* system of ritual kinship... the system was widely accepted in a relatively short span of time. The reasons for this can be found in pre-Hispanic life cycle rituals, blood brotherhood, which existed before the Spanish incursion. (Morais 1979, 46-47)

²⁸ "If there is one aspect of Philippine life that impresses a Western observer, it is the role of the family in the life of the individual. Filipinos inculcate a strong sense of family loyalty which spreads beyond the nuclear family of parents and children. Family obligations extend to cousins several times removed, to in-laws, and to others who are at a marriage or baptism" (Guthrie 1968, 55).

I might add that other Catholic values such as monogamous marriage and thinking of children as blessings or gifts from God also contributed to the cohesion of the family as a unit. The result is that how an individual interacts with the rest of society is naturally framed based on the relationships within the family.

The family pattern becomes, in many ways, the prototype of interpersonal patterns... The tranquility and unanimity cherished within the nuclear family is also cherished and idealized in nonfamily contacts. The Filipino seems to have little chance to learn the technique of dealing with persons who do not seek peace. There are few methods short of ostracism to handle someone who complains bitterly. When his complaints are shared, cliques are formed. Peace is difficult to restore and often comes about through the agencies of third parties. The Filipino has more trouble with those relationships which he cannot handle within family patterns. (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966, 194)

Because of this mentality which lasted for centuries, the transition from family centeredness to that of nationhood at the turn of the 20th century posed, and continues to pose, a serious challenge. The family, clan, and tribe constitute relationships of flesh and blood, and trumps any other civic or social concern. As Putzel says, “it can be argued that it is precisely the networks determined by kin, clan and language group that have weakened democracy in the Philippines and stifled the possibilities of developing civic organization” (Putzel 1999, 202). The idea of society or nationhood, or what Benedict Anderson calls an “imagined community,” is more invisible and conceptual, and requires a long effort to inculcate (Anderson 1991). Miranda is right when he says that “society for many Filipinos is an abstraction... many cannot go beyond the immediate groups associated with family and birth region” (Miranda 1992, 171). This has led to complaints that Filipinos think much less about the welfare of the country than they do about their own families.

The Filipino family is an isolated unit – that means lack of cooperation, lack of coordination, lack of interest for the common welfare of the country. This fact is called small-group centeredness. It is also called social individualism: individualism because this unit considers only itself; social because it concerns a social unit. Now this social unit cuts itself off from the rest of the country, and the people start working with their elbows in order to get ahead in society, to become rich, to become powerful, to get prestige, and so to get into politics, etc. But you also find the same phenomenon in the lower classes, even in the lowest. These people think in the very first place of their own family and disregard the country as a whole.²⁹ (Senden 1974, 40)

²⁹ He further says: “In social individualism, it is a group that is individualistic, the group as a whole, but this individualism has a fragmentary tendency, a splitting effect; it splits the family into isolated members. It is my experience in the Philippines that once the family as a whole is individualistic, and – if you allow me to use the word – a little selfish, disregarding the country as a whole, then this individualism affects the members of the family” (Senden 1974, 40).

Fallows, an American journalist, is similarly harsh in his criticism: “Filipinos pride themselves on their lifelong loyalty to family, schoolmates, compadres, members of the same tribe, residents of the same barangay. The mutual tenderness among the people of Smoky Mountain is enough to break your heart. But

The nature of Philippine politics and corruption is also grounded in the tribalism of the past. This is what led historian Alfred McCoy to call Philippine politics an “anarchy of families” (McCoy 1994). He pointed out how certain land-owner families who were influential during the Spanish period (*principales*) were able to retain their power in the 20th century and remain the most enduring institutions in Philippine government. Unsurprisingly, their main interests are about preserving their positions and fortunes. “While devotion to the family is good, the history of Philippine politics shows how the overvaluing of family relationships has led to corruption, cronyism, and injustice in the courts” (Bulatao 1992, 81). Though this illustrates the most conspicuous forms of family-centeredness, Senden is right when he says that “you also find the same phenomenon in the lower classes, even in the lowest.” The general idea is the priority of the personal over the impersonal. The family is flesh and blood, the most concrete and tangible bond between human beings. Things like society, law, government institutions are impersonal, and are regularly used for serving personal relationships.

In the social sphere we have the problems of nepotism, where people are given jobs on the basis of personal relationships rather than objective qualification and competence. The civil service, instead of being impersonally just, becomes an extension of personal relationships, where one cannot ask for one’s due simply because it is one’s due: one must have some “*kilala sa loob*” (know someone inside).³⁰ (Miranda 1992, 171)

Also, as Guthrie says:

All relatives of whatever degree are important in the Philippines where relationships are personalized. In finding a job, borrowing money or getting advice, one works through someone who knows someone. It is not sentimentality alone that preserves the family system but the stern facts of economic and political necessity. (Guthrie 1968, 56)

To conclude, the tribalism of the past is still very much alive today. Bonifacio sums it up when he says, “our basic social and moral commitment is to the kinship” (Bonifacio 1977, 33). Anything that challenges or contradicts the kinship, like attitudes of impersonal duty or liberal individualism, will encounter resistance in Filipino culture. Jocano agrees with the opinion of Bonifacio:

when observing Filipino friendships I thought often of the Mafia families portrayed in *The Godfather*: total devotion to those within the circle, total war on those outside. Because the boundaries of decedent treatment are limited to the family or tribe, they exclude at least 90 percent of the people in the country. And because of this fragmentation—this lack of nationalism—people treat each other worse in the Philippines than in any other Asian country I have seen.” (Fallows 1987). I will talk more about Fallows’ criticisms later (section 2.3.3).

³⁰ “This superordination of family interest over individual interest has indeed far-reaching significance than is ordinarily perceived. Observers have, again and again, remarked about the high rate of nepotism in both public and private offices. Seen from the prevailing emphasis on family loyalty and support, it is understandable why a government official or the head of a company in a private concern hires a relative, irrespective of the latter’s qualifications, at the first opportunity. It is the concept of family solidarity that normally underlines this practice” (Jocano 1998b, 63).

We give higher premium to family interests than to other community interests. We also frown at individualism of any kind. We do not approve of *kanya-kanya* (to each his/her own) trait. In its stead, we emphasize “groupism” as seen in the importance we attach to kinship and *barkada* (peer group; gang) relationships. Even our definition of personalism does not equate with individualism. Instead, it is relationship-oriented, whereby what others say about what we do is often a very important consideration in decision making. (Jocano 1997, 9)

What is interesting about the concept of *kapwa* is that it was first a tribal concept, but thanks to the Spanish Catholic tradition has been expanded to account for others outside the tribe. To treat another person as *kapwa* is to treat the person as though he or she is part of the family, clan, or tribe, and deserving of utmost concern. This is why, as we will see later, *kapwa* cannot be translated simply as “neighbor” or “others” because these English terms do not have the same familial and tribal background. *Kapwa* can only be understood through the lens of Philippine history.

2.1.2 Animism

The term “animism” was first proposed by E. B. Tylor as the “the general doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general” (Tylor 1871, 21). Though he must be faulted for a condescending attitude to the primitive tribes that he studied, calling them “lower races” and applying the “often-repeated comparison of savages to children” (Tylor 1871, 28), he does helpfully list the general traits and characteristics of animist beliefs in primitive society:

An idea of pervading life and will in nature far outside modern limits, a belief in personal souls animating even what we call inanimate bodies, a theory of transmigration of souls as well in life as after death, a sense of crowds of spiritual beings, sometimes flitting through the air, but sometimes also inhabiting trees and rocks and waterfalls, and so lending their own personality to such material objects. (Tylor 1871, 260)

In the animist worldview everything is “alive” with personal souls and spirits. There is no purely lifeless or physical matter as we conceive of it in modern science.³¹ I adopt what Owen Barfield (who drew from Emile Durkheim and Lucien Levy-Bruhl) calls “original participation.” The primitive tribes who came before the rationalization of the Greeks and the monotheism of the Hebrews had a different consciousness of the world which had not yet put a strict divide between the world and the self. “The self, so far as there yet is one, is still aware that it and the phenomena derive from the same supersensible source” (Barfield 1988, 122-123). The animist was enmeshed, woven, and connected into the world around, such that one could identify oneself with their animal totem, be possessed by the spirit of one’s ancestors or nature spirits, and be absorbed into the cosmic whole in death.

³¹ “It has been noted that Philippine languages have no original or non-loaned words for ‘religion’ or even for ‘sacred’; the distinction between grace and nature, sacred and profane does not even arise” (Maggay 1999, 29).

Everything in human life was also understood in regular cycles that coincided with the cycles of nature.

Notably among our indigenous peoples (but also among rural Filipinos, although to a lesser degree) there is no division between the religious and the social, economic, cultural and other aspects of human life. The Creator is seen in the signs of nature: the rainbow, sun, moon, stars, streams, trees, birds and flowers are symbols of the divine. Prayers and offerings are made in times of planting, harvesting, fishing and hunting; in the life-phases of birth, marriage and death. Once in a lifetime events are perceived to be somehow sacred moments as well. (Miranda 2003, 270; cf. Jocano 1998a, 183)

The first breach from “original participation” according to Barfield was through Greek philosophy (Barfield 1988 43-44) and its flowering in the Middle Ages, which allowed human consciousness to inspect things as distinct from the self through the use of human reason. The Middle Ages still contained elements of “participation” (97-99) but also paved the way for modern science.³² The second and more radical breach was through Descartes and the empiricists in the 17th century. It was the combination of 1) a sharp divide between consciousness and the body, and 2) a lifeless and mechanical view of the world populated only by extended objects (cf. Taylor 1989, 145, 161). If “original participation” had all the naiveté and wonder of a child, modern philosophy represented the disenchanted and disillusioned adult.

Perhaps one benefit of having the animistic tradition still alive in the Philippines is that it affords some kind of access to this “original participation” which has been lost and forgotten in the West. The actual events of Homer took place three millennia ago, and the epics are studied merely as literature. In contrast a “pre-Homeric” (purely oral) culture was present in the Philippines only 450 years ago when the Spanish arrived, and its living influence remains until now.

Deep in the semi-conscious regions of the modern Filipino psyche lurk the same spirits which inhabited his pre-Spanish ancestor, and which are likewise found today in modern Javanese, Sumatran, or Malaysian societies. Theologies and names of God and the spirits may have changed but the “realities” upon which these names are projected remain the same. (Bulatao 1992, 50)

The “original participation” that Barfield talks about can also be called “connectivity.” The vocabulary of being one with another, or having a “shared identity” with another contains a trace layer of this animistic worldview. This layer is hinted at by Miranda when he says: “For the Filipino the world is not so much the world of nature as it is the world of persons; indeed, even the physical universe is a personalist universe” (Miranda 1992, 244).

³² Suggested readings on the positive relationship between the Middle Ages and modern science are Jaki (1978) and Grant (1996); both followed the lead of Pierre Duhem (cf. Jaki, 1987).

The most notable figure in Philippine animism is the *babaylan* or the priestess class, who served as the bridges and mediators between human beings and the spirits. But they were also the primary culture-bearers of the *barangay* societies.

The *babaylan* are very interesting, since they are the most central character in past Philippine society in the fields of the arts, religion, and medicine, and all the kind of theoretical and practical knowledge concerning the phenomena of nature.³³ (Salazar 1999, 6; translation mine)

Although they were mostly women, there were sometimes men who also served as *babaylan*.³⁴ But their privileged status as women is connected to the more general equality between men and women in Philippine society. “The equality of men and women is an ancient Malay tradition which has withstood Muslim influences in Indonesia and Spanish Catholic traditions in the Philippines” (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966, 42). There were several insurgencies led by *babaylan* until the early 19th century, when they were gradually replaced by more Christianized peasant movements.

Though the time of the *babaylan* is past, what is more interesting is how animism has survived in and through Catholicism. One will note that Catholicism at least provides an alternative to the *babaylan* in the figure of the Virgin Mary, who is also a mediator and intercessor with the divine.³⁵ The ancestor and nature spirits have been replaced with the saints. The result is a unique brand of “folk Catholicism” which mixes elements from both worlds. A brown scapular or prayer booklet might simultaneously be understood as how it is taught by Roman Catholic theology and also as an *anting-anting* (“magical amulet”) from the animist worldview. The belief in the *aswang* or dark creatures is not contradicted but somehow supported by the Catholic faith.³⁶ “Many Filipinos move freely between the two spheres without adverting to any rupture or contradiction. Occasional Christians during particular events (*Pasko, Mahal na Araw, Ondas, Pyesta*), they are arguably animist for the rest of the year” (Miranda 2003, 270). Miranda also adds:

Hardly anyone denies that some elements of the religio-magical view have survived into our time, either through metamorphosis, popular maintenance or inculturation. Benevolent spirits are often pointed to as mediators by their mediums, e.g., native shamans, magicians, seers, priests and so on. Faith healers, whether as individuals or groups of Espiritistas are living fossils of the biocosmic worldview. Certain forms of devotions to the Santo Niño, Black Nazarene, Marian shrines, and thaumaturgic

³³ “Ang *babaylan* ay napakainteresante, sapagkat siya ang pinakasentral na personahe sa dating Lipunang Pilipino sa larangan ng kalinangan, relihiyon at medisina at lahat ng uri ng teoretikal at praktikal na kaalaman hinggil sa mga penomeno ng kalikasan” (Salazar 1999, 6).

³⁴ “May mga *babaylan* ding lalaki, subalit kadalasan sila ay may pagkabakla o kaya talagang tahasan nang bakla o kaya binabae/hermaphrodite” (Salazar 1999, 23).

³⁵ For a picture of Marian devotion in a modern Philippines context, see Sapitula (2013).

³⁶ Though the *aswang* is quite popular in Filipino culture and I think, quite revealing of the residues of animist beliefs, it has been largely ignored by scholars. One of the most notable exceptions is Maximo Ramos’ *Creatures of Philippine Lower Mythology* (1971).

saints are arguably the products of formally Christian elements and biocosmic strata. In this movement the indigenous biocosmic view clearly stood its ground while absorbing elements from Christianity. (Miranda 2003, 250)

Some might even claim that the living elements of animism are still weightier and more tangible than what people would call “orthodox” Catholicism.

As a belief system, [animism] is so deeply rooted that it simply supersedes official Roman theology in spite of the fact that most of these people are Roman Catholics. Even among the well-educated class there is often a split between the conceptual thought system which is learned in school and the emotional awareness absorbed from the culture. (Bulatao 1992, 52)

Some people, like Joaquin, defend the animist layer as contributing to the vitality and extravagance of Filipino folk Catholicism.³⁷ Unlike the Catholicism in Europe where the over-intellectualization of faith has surrendered to widespread secularism, Catholicism in the Philippines still preserves a living experience of the inarticulate and mysterious.

Animism should definitely not be ignored in our understanding of Filipino concepts. *Loób* is not an autonomous will but a will which is still bound to this “connectivity.” There is reasonable grounds to calling it not just “will” but a “holistic and relational will,” as I will argue later (section 3.1.4-5). Keeping the notion of “original participation” in mind presents a useful counter to thinking about *loób* in terms of an independent will or a modern “self.” If the central concept of *loób* is grounded in this animist worldview, the same goes for all the Filipino virtues which take the *loób* as their primary subject.

To conclude this section on the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition, I should reiterate that it is not “past” but still active and alive, though running underneath the two newer traditions. The understanding of *kapwa* is linked to the tribal mentality of the past, which is still an undercurrent in Filipino familial and

³⁷ “Almost gone, happily, is the day when puritans assailed or, worse, smiled down at such marriages of the pagan and the Christian, though there are those among us who still deplore our “folk Catholicism” as religious illiteracy. The last word is the key to the misunderstanding. A certain class of society regards religion as something to be *read* – from a Bible, a missal, a prayer book. Its ideal Catholic is the well-behaved person who makes, in well-bred tones, the proper responses in a dialogue mass. That’s what’s called the participation of the laity. But for the common folk of the Philippines, participation has to be far more active than a mere reading out of words from a page.

Too much nonsense has been said about Catholics being passive in worship. In the West maybe; but not here in the Philippines, where our style of worship, on the contrary, approaches the extravagant. We chant or sob our prayers out loud; we walk on our knees; we dance in church; we carry holy images on our shoulders in howling procession; we flog ourselves on Good Friday. Outsiders to our culture find our style of worship distasteful and conclude that we don’t “understand” Christianity or true religion. Do they? Can Christianity, can religion, really be reduced to pure and simple ethics – to living by God’s word, to doing and being good? That was the Puritan ideal – and we know how sick the Puritans ended up. Their mistake was in thinking, being no friends of exuberance, that they could reduce religion to its most common denominator and could take the *thu* out of *enthusiasm*, being too austere to care for a word that unites divinity and frenzy, though it perfectly expresses the religious impulse in man” (Joaquin 2004, 105).

interpersonal relationships today. The understanding of *loób* should not ignore the background of animism, which persists in Filipino folk Catholicism. In the absence of any ancient canon or written text that definitively establishes these connections, one should pay very close attention to the history of the culture itself. At the very least, an awareness of how Filipino ethical concepts are grounded in the tribal and animist tradition will help us avoid acceptance of any theory that denies its characteristic features (by taking for granted modern individualism or materialism for example). As we will see in the next section, perhaps one reason why the Spanish Catholic tradition was able to merge well with the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition was because it also affirms the importance of both kinship relations and spirituality.

2.2 The Spanish Catholic tradition

A knowledge of the Spanish Catholic tradition is important to understand how Filipino ethical concepts, with their tribal and animist base, were modified and expanded by Christian doctrine during the 333 years of Spanish colonization. Insofar as the Filipino (Tagalog) language was retained by the Spanish and not replaced by the Spanish language, this allowed for the preservation and evolution of native ethical concepts.

Because both the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and Spanish Catholic tradition were “pre-modern” traditions and given the great geographical distance of the Philippines from Europe and modern developments, one can reasonably call the 333-year period until the end of the 19th century (1565-1898) a kind of “medieval time warp.” This is of course a relative term in that it takes European history as its point of reference. I intend it as a neutral historical claim, without any of the negative judgements levelled against the term “medieval.” It is simply the case that modern ideas did not influence the Philippines until the end of the 19th century. Modern ideas came in trickles through the *ilustrado* class (wealthy Filipinos who could study in Europe)³⁸, but it was only during the American period at the start of the 20th century with their establishment of public schools and secular universities, that modern ideas took hold in the Philippines. The term “medieval time warp” is instructive in this regard: it helps us avoid insisting on indiscriminately using any modern theory to interpret the concepts from this period, at least, if we intend to be faithful to the internal assumptions of the concepts themselves. If one wants to truly understand concepts from this period, one should try to understand them “on their own terms,” and not from a condescending position that privileges modernity.

This is actually where Thomism comes in. As will be seen in this section, Thomism is an integral part of the Spanish Catholic tradition in the Philippines. It

³⁸ Agoncillo points to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 as the time when modern ideas started to trickle into the Philippines (Agoncillo 1990, 119).

enjoyed a greater monopoly in the intellectual climate of the Philippine clergy since it did not have to contend with other scholastic schools of thought (Scotism, Nominalism, etc.), or later, the challenges of the Enlightenment. It is a “historical insider” in one of the traditions which helped shape Filipino ethical concepts and on this basis should at least be considered a very promising dialogue partner for the study of those ethical concepts.

The start of Spanish rule in the Philippines is traced back to the time when Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer sent by the Spanish King to look for spices in the East, circumnavigated the globe and landed in the archipelago on March 1521 (Agoncillo 1990, 71-72). After the death of Magellan at the hands of the Visayan warrior Lapu-Lapu in the island of Mactan, the next Spanish expedition to the Philippines was led by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565 (Agoncillo 1990, 74). He was appointed by King Philip II as the first governor-general of the Philippines (the islands were previously named *Las Islas Filipinas* by Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, in honor of Philip II). This officially marks the “colonization” of the Philippines for the next 333 years, which ended in 1898 when the Philippine revolutionaries declared independence and when the Americans acquired the Philippines through the Treaty of Paris.

This colonization was relatively easy and peaceful in comparison to the Spanish conquest of South America. “The postconquest situation in the Philippines differs markedly from that in sixteenth-century Mexico. The initial Spanish impact on the Philippines was unquestionably less painful than on Mexico” (Phelan 1967, 105). This was mainly due to the absence of mining and metallic wealth in the Philippines (as far as technology then would allow) and also the lack of spices (cf. Constantino 1975, 55-56). Whereas Mexico witnessed an upsurge of Spanish population seeking wealth and prosperity and resulted in harsh exploitation of the Mexican laborer, there was relatively little to attract a Spanish citizen to travel to the Philippines. In addition to a lack of material wealth, there was no older civilization with its own centralized government and religion to offer staunch resistance to the Spanish. As I mentioned, there were only tribes of varying size who, although they also offered resistance here and there, were easily subdued after missionary work and religious conversion. Finally, the contagious diseases that wiped out entire swathes of the population in South America was not witnessed in the Philippines, where natives had perhaps developed better immunity through centuries of maritime trade dealings.

The Spanish tradition has garnered the most unfairly tarnished reputation in the present day thanks to the combination of the Philippine revolutionaries at the end of the 19th century who lived during Spain’s decline and also the American propaganda during the 20th century. The main misunderstanding is to think that the situation of Spain that Jose Rizal depicts in his major work *Noli Me Tangere* in 1887, a Spain that was oppressive, paranoid and on the decline, was the same Spain that was present in the islands for those 333 years. What is missed is that Spain in the late nineteenth century was already at one of its lowest points, no longer the great

superpower that began the colonization of the Philippines. As Manuel Sarkisyanz says: “in Filipino textbooks, Spain is just one and that is unfair... the same struggle of Rizal was waged in Spain between Spaniards for a much longer period” (Ocampo 2012, 134). The old failing powers in Spain itself were being challenged from within Spain; it had already diminished in international prestige for quite some time.

Nothing is said in the textbooks of what John Schumacher calls the “Golden Age” of the Philippine Church in the country from 1700-1768, which witnessed among other things the rise of the *beatas* or holy women (Schumacher 2009). The progress of the Church was interrupted by the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768, caused by the Bourbon regalism which began to view the Church merely as an instrument of the crown; the previous Hapsburg dynasty at least had taken their role seriously as promoters of the Catholic faith. Perhaps one can trace a steady decline of the Spanish administration of the Philippines from there, irreversible especially after the French Revolution in 1798-99 which forever changed the intellectual landscape of Europe. But the point is that it “declined” and was in the process of change. The Spain that the revolutionaries complained about in the 1890s was quite different from what it was before.

Nothing is said of how the Spanish condemned and fought against the widespread native practices of “slave-raiding” (attacking other tribes to turn them into slaves), and also how they did not enslave the natives as other empires would do to the Africans. “Because Gregory XIV issued a bull on April 18, 1591 forbidding slavery under penalty of excommunication, slavery was abolished in these islands long before it was suppressed in Europe and America” (Miranda 2003, 192). Under Spanish rule the Philippines finally had a “unity” which it did not previously have, being composed of warring tribes and short-lived regional alliances. Joaquin in particular is intent on pointing out how the major technological advances that ushered the Philippines into “civilization” were not contributions from neighboring cultures but from the Spanish.

All the things that the Javanese and Chinese and Siamese and Arabs could have brought us, could have taught us, we had to wait for Spain and the friar to bring us, to teach us. If we had relied on the Javanese, Chinese, Siamese or Arabs to help us advance, we might still be – as indeed the highlanders of the North and even the Moros of the South still are – in a prewheel, prestone, pretrade and prebook culture. (Joaquin 2004, 128)

In particular, the contribution of the Spanish to the written history of the Philippines cannot be underestimated. It is only through their historical documentation that the Philippines finally enters “written history.” It is also through their careful documentation of the native languages that the Filipino ethical words and concepts we are concerned with are recorded for the very first time.

2.2.1 Textualization and translation

When Jose Rizal, the national hero, wanted to inquire about a pre-Hispanic “civilization” in the Philippines, he could only do so by consulting the works of Spanish historians, most notably de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* which he made an annotation of (Rizal [1890] 1962). Any student of Philippine history still needs to turn to the works of Spanish chroniclers and missionaries to know about its past. It is clear that though there was some form of writing in the islands (the *baybayin* script) prior to Spanish arrival, this could not produce a written history as it was written on leaves and bark which easily decomposed. They were only used for short, personal messages. The tribes were also a long way, culturally speaking, from *writing* histories. History would have instead been woven into the oral tradition of myths and epics. In short, without the Spanish there would be no such thing as *written* Philippine history as we know it.

European missionaries laid the foundation of Western scholarship in the Philippines. The most pervasive form of colonial authority, the Catholic Church generated new knowledge through the institutions and practices missionaries initiated. Missionaries spread a new religion, established churches and schools, organized devotional associations, introduced crops and technology, and built towns. Moreover (and this is what primarily concerns us here) they “**textualized**” the Philippines in a body of written texts that did not only underwrite how colonialism was conducted, **it has become an indispensable archive for students of the Philippines even today**. (Mojares 2006a, 384; emphasis mine)

Other scholarly pursuits would contribute to the sense of identity of the Philippines, such as the making of maps of the islands (cartography) and a thorough documentation of the various languages of the Philippines (dictionaries and grammar books). Dictionaries and grammars were a stepping stone to the process of translating and preaching the Christian message into the vernacular for missionary work. There were 20 different grammar books for the Tagalog language alone by 1776, and this total grew to 37 by 1860 (Mojares 2006a, 384). Meanwhile, two notable Tagalog dictionaries from the beginning and end of Spanish colonization respectively are the *Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala* by Pedro de San Buena Ventura (1613) and the *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* by Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar (1860). Their definitions of *loób* and *kapwa* will be given in the respective sections in Chapter 3.

It is an interesting twist of history that the Spanish did not force the native population to learn the Spanish language, but opted instead to translate the Spanish message into the native language. There were decrees issued from Spain as early as 1634 and 1686 that required the clergy to teach the Spanish language to Filipinos, but this had little impact in the islands (Hardacker 2012, 10). As I mentioned, the Philippines had nothing like the gold of Mexico or even the spice of Moluccas to attract Spaniards, and for this reason there were significantly fewer Spaniards who came to the islands. So even if it had been desirable there would not have been

enough administrative manpower to teach the natives Spanish especially in the early years of colonization. As there was also no great civilization to overthrow (and languages are often tied to the prevailing culture of the civilization) the missionaries reasonably chose the policy of translation over linguistic domination. The earliest product was the *Doctrina Christiana*, the first book printed in the Philippines in 1593 (Agoncillo 1990, 96), which was a basic resource for the missionaries containing the most important prayers, the Ten Commandments and essential tenets of the Gospel in Tagalog.

The usual criticism leveled at the Spaniards for not teaching the natives their language on a wide scale is that the Spanish wanted to keep the natives in a state of ignorance and naiveté (cf. Agoncillo 1990, 97). This is indeed true, but what is ironic is that if the Spanish had in fact taught the natives the language they would be presently criticized for obliterating the native culture (cf. Agoncillo 1990, 100). This is seen in the example of the Americans, who took the completely opposite strategy in the 20th century by establishing an American-style public school system (and below I will talk about the complaints against their inculcation of American values). The point is that whether the Spaniards had or had not taught the natives the Spanish language on a wide scale there will always be criticisms from contemporary scholars.

But the fact that the Spaniards did *not* teach the natives Spanish and opted for a policy of translation had interesting results. Native concepts were preserved rather than forgotten. Most of the Tagalog words that we mention in this dissertation, such as *loób* and *kapwa*, were present even before the Spanish arrived and may have had centuries of existence before that. If the Spanish theoretically had established a public school system all these concepts could have been forgotten in favor of Spanish words and concepts. But as it is, not only were these words preserved, they were “expanded” by the Spanish tradition, especially those words that had moral significance and could be borrowed for the cause of the Christian message.

The Spaniard’s efforts to translate Christian doctrine into the native vernacular transformed the vernacular and in time the consciousness of its speakers. Similarly, the Tagalogs’ attempts to read and appropriate Christian-colonial discourse in their own language tended to change the meaning of that discourse and hence the very shape and feel of the colonial legacy as a whole. (Rafael 1993, xx)

Because the Spanish used the native languages rather than overthrow it, it provided an opportunity for the mixing of two traditions. Rafael is critical of this move because he analyzes it in terms of Foucaultian power relations. He criticizes how the Spaniards hijacked those Filipino terms that could secure their authority, and also how mistranslations were so prolific that the Christian message was hardly understood. He focuses in particular on *hiya* and *utang-na-loób* which according to him were used to manipulate the natives.

To the extent that Christianity was phrased in the idiom of *hiya* and *utang na loob*, Tagalogs felt constrained to attend to it. Caught up in what seemed like an unending

stream of undecipherable words put forth in terms of reciprocal obligations, the natives “converted,” that is, availed themselves of the sacraments as a way of entering into a debt transaction with the Spaniards and their God. (Rafael 1993, 127)

Rafael interprets this phenomenon of translation primarily through power struggle and in the process misses those other Filipino concepts which are not directly tied to mechanisms of obligation. He hardly mentions *kapwa* or the idea of having a *magandang-loób* (beautiful will) or *mabuting-loób* (goodwill) in how one relates to another. However he is right that the results of translation were unpredictable and in many cases surprising. For example, who could have predicted how the natives would appropriate the Tagalog *Pasyon* (Passion of Christ play) to frame their own “revolutionary” movements by the end of the 19th century?³⁹ Without knowing it, the Spanish translated into Filipino certain “harmless” Christian elements that would eventually give the peasants a means of interpreting their own suffering and resistance.

Conversion in early Tagalog colonial society was predicated on translation; yet Spaniard’s and Tagalogs’ notions and practices of translation differed to the degree that the relative position of one to the other remained ambiguously defined. Christian conversion and colonial rule emerged through what appeared to be a series of mistranslations. But in fact, as I have tried to demonstrate, such mistranslations were ways to render the other understandable. **Each group read into the other’s language and behavior possibilities that the original speakers had not intended or foreseen.**⁴⁰ (Rafael 1993, 211; emphasis mine)

This also says something about the development of Filipino ethical concepts. It was not planned or foreseen. It was simply the result of introducing Christianity in translated form to a culture which already had its own unique tribal and animist tradition, as if grafting a young branch onto the stem of another tree. It was not certain what kind of fruit the process would produce.

2.2.2 The medieval time warp

“We in the Philippines are moving along at least three centuries behind the car of progress; we are barely beginning to emerge from the Middle Ages,” says the philosopher Tasio in Rizal’s 1887 novel *Noli Me Tangere* (Rizal 1912, 409). Just as Europe was being ushered into the modern age by figures such as Luther, Descartes, Newton, and movements such as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the Philippines half a world away was still just entering into its “medieval” age. It was for the most part insulated from the developments in Europe. Those who knew enough about the modern developments were Spanish clergy trained in the universities, and

³⁹ See Reynaldo Ileto’s *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979). This theme will be elaborated in section 4.6.1.

⁴⁰ It must also be noted however that many crucial terms from Christianity were also left untranslated, such as *Dios*, *Virgen*, and *Espiritu Santo* partly brought about by the concerns of the Council of Trent to keep Catholicism uniform in the face of the Protestant threat (Rafael 1993, 29). One can only speculate how it could have been if the Spanish had exploited native words like *Bathala*, *Babaylan*, or *Diwata*.

yet even these universities were heavily guarded to conform with the scholastic tradition.

Any influence the Enlightenment could have had in the Philippines and in the University of Santo Tomas had to pass through the crucible of the Spanish universities. The fact was that although there were “enlightened” churchmen in France, England and Germany, the same cannot be said of Spain. Perhaps this was because the prevailing socio-religious atmosphere in Spain was opposed to them. Furthermore, the Inquisition, in spite of its state of decadence, would not have allowed it. (Villaruel 2012, 211)

Outside the universities was a mixture of native folklore and Catholic piety that resembled the magical and “superstitious” atmosphere of the European middle ages, albeit with even more animism. The administrative government was a kind of feudalism, with the older noble *datu* families now serving as the principales or landed class, and former slaves became farmers and peasants. As I have mentioned, the Spanish also simply reinforced the dominant social structures already present in the islands. The level of technology too was not unlike that of the middle ages.

To visitors from Europe, the country seemed caught in a medieval warp. Writing from the Philippines to a friend in France in 1766, the French scientist Guillaume Le Gentil remarked: “I am writing you, sir, from the other side of the world, and I might even add, from the fourteenth century.” Of the state of education in the colony he wrote: “All the ancient prejudices of the schools would appear to have been abandoned in Europe only to take refuge in Manila, where they will probably survive for a long time... Spain is a hundred years behind France in science, and Manila is a hundred years behind Spain.”⁴¹ (Mojares 2006a, 393)

One can expect to find haphazard syntheses of the two traditions initiated by the natives themselves. One early example, though little referenced in the historical literature, is the movement of holy Catholic women in Manila who were called *beatas*. The leader of this movement was a woman called the Hermana Sebastiana (Joaquin 2004, 163-199; Schumacher 2009, 43-51). They unfortunately encountered a lot of opposition from the Spanish authorities, but it is easy to compare them with the *babaylan* class that prevailed during the previous tradition.

Why it was women who started this mistico-insurgent tradition is explained by our history. When Spain arrived in the islands our culture was on the priestess stage – and the native priestesses, along with their feminized male subordinates, proved to be the fiercest defenders of the old culture. The battle was between the moon cult of the native priestess and the sun cult of the foreign Christian priest. And the *beatas* of the 17th century may be said to have been continuing this resistance to male dominance, a resistance that produced one telling tableau after another during the

⁴¹ Mojares is quoting Guillaume Le Gentil’s *A Voyage to the Indian Seas* (Le Gentil 1964, xx, 75).

17th-century period of persecution, when the unlettered *beatas* stood up against the Archbishop of Manila and the Capitan-General de Filipinas.⁴² (Joaquin 2004, 269)

It is interesting that as Schumacher notes, in such movements “the racial line between Spaniard and Filipino was dissolving, at least among women” (Schumacher 2009, 50). It was easily shown that Filipino women could step into the role of *beata* just as well as Spanish women. Later in the next two centuries however male figures such as Apolinario de la Cruz of the *Cofradia de San Jose* in 1840, and Apo Lakay of the *Guardia de Honor* in the 1890s, would lead the religious revival and be a prototype for other millenarian movements (Sturtevant 1976). While the more popular *Katipunan* movement of the Philippine revolutionaries was of a political character, early movements such as the *Guardia de Honor* were almost exclusively religious, centered on communal living, prayer and the expectation of the end of the world. Their armed resistance was only incidental, insofar as they had to defend themselves from those who were suspicious of their large numbers. Such movements represent the mixing of the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition on the level of the grassroots. They managed to “translate” and “transform” the Christianity of the Spanish into the genuine sentiments of the Filipino.

This landscape of popular piety and daily life in the Philippines during the 333 years of Spanish colonization, a “medieval time warp,” serves as the background for the philosophical contribution of the Spanish Catholic tradition to the Philippines which is Thomism.

2.2.3 Thomism as philosophical canon

Thomism is the oldest philosophical tradition with a text present in the Philippines. In the absence of “ancient” philosophical texts, the closest substitute is the canon of Thomism in the style of Spanish Scholasticism. Though for the most part the careful study of Aquinas was limited to Spanish clergy until the rise of the Filipino clergy in the 19th century, one should not discount the indirect influence of Thomism as Thomist-trained clergy were sent to watch over the native population. Thomism, conceived as a stronghold of Catholic thought, permeated the local consciousness (similarly, in India only a few Brahmin actually read and studied the Vedas themselves, but it is a foundational text for Hinduism).

The seminaries were steeped in Scholasticism, and probably the schools as well. Theologians of the time taught morality in line with the doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Spanish theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries. Thus traditional principles of Christian morality interpreted by Scholasticism began to color the ways, values, and conscience of Hispanized Filipinos. (Miranda 2003, 252)

⁴² Though Nick Joaquin believes the *beatas* to be a unique and unprecedented phenomenon, there is a precedent in the “beguines” of Europe, especially in the Low Countries in the 13th-16th centuries.

Prior to the arrival of Thomism there is no record of any philosophical activity in the Philippines, even if we use the loose criterion of philosophy as any extended debate and argument from central ideas. Obviously, still being an oral culture the task was still focused on the “memorization” of myths and epics rather than any kind of prolonged argumentation or commentary. The Spanish “textualization” changed that, along with the importation of what was then a very living philosophical tradition.

The University of Santo Tomas (UST) (originally named the *Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Santisimo Rosario*) was founded in Manila by the Dominicans in 1611 (Villarroel 2012, xxi; Agoncillo 1990, 92). In 1645 it was raised to the rank of University by Pope Innocent X, making it the oldest university in Southeast Asia with a charter. The University of Santo Tomas was patterned after the then dominant University of Salamanca and other universities in Spain, with their rigorous curriculum of philosophy and theology (Villarroel 2012, 17-18). The student would begin his philosophical education with a collection of Aristotle’s works, called the *Libro de los piques*.⁴³ After five-years of philosophy, the student for the priesthood would study theology for another four or five years. The most important works for study were the *Sentences* (*Sententiarum Libri Quattuor*) of Peter Lombard and the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas⁴⁴, along with commentaries from the great theologians of the School of Salamanca, such as Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Domingo Bañez, etc. (Villarroel 2012, 69-70).

UST produced great theologians in a Thomistic vein. Villarroel identifies the three greatest theologians of the 17th century as Fr. Domingo Gonzalez, Fr. Sebastian de Oquendo, and Fr. Juan de Paz (Villarroel 2012, 127-134). Fr. Juan de Paz, perhaps the most famous among them, was called by historians “The Oracle of Asia” and by his contemporaries as “Maestro.” He was made famous also in Europe for his *Consultas*, which was a compilation of his erudite answers to questions from people from all stations of life, from priests to peasants, all over the Philippines.

⁴³ Villarroel says of the oldest surviving (and handwritten) edition from 1636: “This “edition” preserved in the UST Archives contains the following Aristotelian works: The eight books of *Physica*; the two books of *De Generatione et Corruptione*, the three books of *De Anima*; the *Praedicabilia Porphyrii*, the *Praedicamenta*, and the *Posteriora*. The selection represents fairly well the various groupings of the “*Corpus Aristotelicum*” (Logic, Physics, Metaphysics, and Psychology)... Through the centuries, this handwritten volume of Aristotle’s works has been called the *Libro de los piques*, a name mentioned with reverence in the statutes of 1785. It was used exactly in the same manner by the first graduates of 1629 and by Fr. Jose Burgos and his contemporaries in the 19th century” (Villarroel 2012, 68-69).

⁴⁴ Students in the bachelors of theology would study the *Summa Theologiae* for one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. In the first year, they would study the treatise on God (*Summa Theologiae* I, qq. 1-65) and the treatise on the ultimate end of man and on human acts (*S. Th.* I-II, qq. 1-61); in the second year the treatise on creation (*S. Th.* I, qq. 65-end) and the treatise on virtues in general, law and grace (*S. Th.* I-II, 61-end); in the third year the treatises on the theological virtues (*S. Th.* II-II, qq. 1-100) and the treatise on the incarnation (*S. Th.* III); in the fourth year the treatise on the cardinal virtues and states of perfection (*S. Th.* II-II, 100-end) and the treatise on the sacraments (supplement to the *Summa*) (Villarroel 1972, 25).

The policy of ordaining Filipino priests began only in the early 18th century (Villarroel 2012, 179). Prior to that there were isolated individuals ordained as Filipino priests, but nothing in a systematic fashion.⁴⁵ To give an impression of the student population of UST in the 18th century, a rare preserved enrolment list from 1776 shows 360 students, 169 of whom were Filipino, and the rest Chinese mestizos, Spaniards, and other races (Villarroel 2012, 245). Another preserved list, from 1785 shows a significant growth of students, 573 in total, with 284 being Filipinos (Villarroel 2012, 248). Although only a handful of these students aspired for the priesthood and extensively studied Aquinas, whatever philosophical and theological training they received would have conformed to Thomism.

Mariano Pilapil (1759-1818) is, according to the records, the first Filipino to earn a doctorate. He is also famous for having his name attached to the *Pasyon Pilapil*, the version of the Passion of Christ play which would have a tremendous influence on the local millenarian movements (he is mistakenly credited for writing the whole play, though he only edited it and wrote the foreword).

Mariano Pilapil earned a doctorate in sacred theology from Santo Tomas (making him the first native to earn a doctorate) and built a distinguished ecclesiastical career, publishing pastoral and pedagogical texts, and serving as ecclesiastical censor and philosophy professor at Colegio de San Jose. (Mojares 2006a, 410)

I mention Pilapil in order to note that Filipino priests themselves—who were the most educated Filipinos prior to the rise of the *ilustrado* (enlightened) class in the late 19th century—were trained in Thomism. In the 19th century UST also contributed to the worldwide Thomistic revival through Zeferino Gonzalez whose work *Estudio sobre la filosofía de Santo Tomas* was published by the UST press in 1864 in three volumes. This was part of the prelude that would eventually lead to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* in 1879, which marks the Neo-Scholastic revival contra modernist philosophy (especially Descartes and Kant). Among Gonzalez's students was the Filipino priest Jose Burgos (Villarroel 1972, 17), who was accused with two priests Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora for a mutiny in Cavite and executed in 1872. (collectively called the “GomBurZa”; their execution would be a spark for the Philippine revolution). Burgos himself made the customary oath to defend the doctrine of St. Thomas upon receiving his Bachelors of Philosophy (Villarroel 1972, 23).

The major problem for the Thomist tradition in the Philippines was that it was kept in the hands of the Spanish clergy and was a strict and rigid Thomism which did not allow for any deviations or “inculturation.” It was not, as the *Pasyon* was, free for the natives to appropriate to their own uses. The closed mindedness of Thomism is caricatured by Rizal in Captain Basilio, “who maintained that after the death of St. Thomas Aquinas the world had made no more progress” (Rizal 1912, 138). Rizal's own sentiments are echoed in the philosopher Tasio who says that the scholasticism

⁴⁵ The first Filipino priest to be ordained was Francisco Baluyot in December 1698 (Schumacher 2009, 81).

inherited from the Dominicans is “already dead in spite of Leo XIII, for there is no Pope who can revive what common sense has judged and condemned” (Rizal 1912, 409).

The induction into a rigid Thomism would leave many 20th century Filipino philosophers with a bitter taste. As Emerita Quito says of the Thomist school in the Philippines:

The Thomist school, which is the most populous [in the Philippines], stays close to the philosophy of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, and views all other philosophies in the light of Aristotlelico-Thomism [sic]. This school considers as gospel truth the writings of the Catholic saint. Hence, there is no originality in this school; no new ideas are forged; Catholic ideas of the Medieval Ages are repeated with more or less depth. (Quito 1983, 38)

Romualdo Abulad, a colleague of Quito, is even more resentful:

Thomism in this country became so indomitably stubborn that it started giving the impression that no truth could possibly lie outside of its pre-established framework. In my youth I saw very clearly how intellectual doggedness could prove fatal to an aging philosophy. The harder it refused to budge from its preferred supremacy, the more ludicrous the Thomism of the fifties and the sixties looked to us. (Abulad 1988, 3)

To “inculturate” Thomism back then in the “fifties and sixties” would have been absolutely unthinkable, perhaps would even have counted as some kind of sacrilege. It would take a post-Vatican II attitude, plus all the new innovations with Thomism, to provide an opening for such an attempt. But I suggest that Thomism has the inherent resources for the synthesis of traditions similar to how the *Pasyon* became a genuinely Filipino piece for the native populace. Without the strictures of the rigid Thomists this can now be done. And it is an attractive option precisely because Thomism is such an integral part of Philippine history and was formative in the culture that we are now seeking to describe. To use Aquinas is to use a philosophical “insider,” so to speak, with multiple advantages over using any modern philosophy. F. P. A. Demeterio III also recognized that once the “closed mindedness” was removed, Thomism was in a natural default position to contribute to Filipino philosophy.

There is a widespread misconception that to develop Filipino philosophy, one must abandon Thomism. Thomism is the most significant variant of Filipino philosophy in terms of its number of adherents, and to develop this variant would have much impact on the development of Filipino philosophy. (Demeterio III 2005, 23)

This is especially true if what we are seeking is a healthy synthesis of traditions rather than the dismissal of one at the expense of another. For example, Thomism possesses a strong affinity with the previous animist tradition and its spiritual view of the world. The whole phenomena of *anitos* and *diwatas* are not immediately

dispelled as childish superstition, such as it is in modernity, but is opened up for further discussion as separate substances.⁴⁶ But more than spiritual entities, what is shared is the general worldview of “holism” and “connectivity” that is no longer easily found in the modern tradition. The medieval mind resonates well with the participatory nature of the animist mind. What Barfield says about the man of the European middle ages applies just as well to the man of the Philippine “middle ages.”

It is clear that he did not feel himself isolated by his skin from the world outside him to quite the same extent as we do. He was integrated or mortised into it, each a different part of him being united to a different part of it by some invisible thread. In his relation to his environment, the man of the middle ages was rather less like an island, rather more like an embryo, than we are. (Barfield 1988, 78)

Medieval philosophy which emphasized participation and the great chain of being did not emphasize the manipulation of the world for the sake of man’s selfish ends, such as in modern technology that has led to the ecological crisis, but in properly finding one’s place in the pre-ordained order of the universe and fulfilling a stewardship of nature. According to Mercado this is the same spirit behind Filipino philosophy that “is concerned with the harmony with oneself, with others, with the visible and invisible world” (Mercado 1994, 95).

But Thomism is not only compatible in a “backward” direction, it is also compatible in a “forward” direction as can be seen especially in the different 20th century versions of Thomism that have sought to synthesize and reconcile Thomism with some aspect of modern thought.⁴⁷ The French Thomist Etienne Gilson has sought to retrieve the priority of existence (*esse*) in the philosophy of Aquinas, while Jacques Maritain has tried to apply Thomistic principles to modern political theory. The Transcendental Thomists such as Joseph Marechal, Karl Rahner, and Bernard Lonergan have tried to reconcile Aquinas with modern philosophy, especially the (previously condemned) philosophies of Descartes and Kant. The Laval/River Forest school of Thomism have found a meeting point between Aquinas and modern science, most notably in the new discoveries of quantum physics which challenged the assumptions of classical physics. Catholic phenomenologists such as Edith Stein and Karol Wojtyla have in turn attempted to supplement the Thomistic foundation with insights from phenomenology. The Thomist that I used extensively in this dissertation, Norris Clarke, was himself influenced by the Transcendental Thomists and phenomenological Thomism.

⁴⁶ See Aquinas’ discussion on angels in *Summa Theologiae* qq. 50-64, his work *De substantiis separatis* (On separate substances), and the last question (q. 16) of *De malo* (On evil). Also as Bulatao says, “the animist model resembles the Christian in that it peoples a material world with a variety of spirits. But the difference lies in conceiving these spirits as living normal, earthly lives of their own as if they were a race of humans, unlike the Christian view of spirit which polarizes them into the totally good and totally bad. Thus animism conceives the earth as peopled by two kinds of beings, the seen and the unseen, occupying the same plots of ground, bathing in the same stream, moving through the same fields and forests” (Bulatao 1992, 50).

⁴⁷ For a good survey see Fergus Kerr’s *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (2002).

That there can be such a healthy growth of different Thomisms in dialogue with modern thought serves as a sign that Thomism need not be a closed and shut system of the past. It is certainly pre-modern in its essentials, but not without the internal capacity to enter into dialogue with modern thought. This is crucial because as I will show in the next section, the Philippines has been greatly influenced by the American modern tradition and one needs a framework that can dialogue with this tradition as well.

The syncretization between the Spanish Catholic tradition and the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition is what produced the special features of Filipino ethical concepts. “By the end of the Spanish rule, the transformation of the Philippine colony had created a blending of the native and Spanish cultures” (Agoncillo 1990, 101). Both traditions from which these ethical concepts were born were “pre-modern” traditions, and should be respected as such. Thomism has a privileged place within the Spanish Catholic tradition in the Philippines and is a veritable “historical insider.” It is probably the closest thing to a standard philosophical canon the Philippines has ever had. At the very least, it should be considered a natural dialogue partner in the explanation of pre-modern Filipino ethical concepts, more so than modern theories.

2.3 The American modern tradition

Despite the rhetoric of post-colonialism and anti-colonialism amongst activist scholars, it can be said that of the three traditions the American has the most positive image among Filipinos in general. The continuous dominance of the US in world affairs as well as the widespread cultural influence of American culture through Hollywood and the Internet continue to secure this image. The same cannot be said of Spain, which was not only villainized in the Filipino history textbooks, but which has unfortunately also suffered so many political and economic setbacks in the 20th century. The principle that “history is written by the victors” applies here.

The Americans were luckier than the Spaniards. The good that Spain did in the Philippines became forgotten, was belittled; only the evil was remembered. But a reverse amnesia afflicted us with regard to the Americans. (Joaquin 2004, 325)

Constantino shares the same sentiment.

Spain was the villain, America was the savior. To this day, our histories still gloss over the atrocities committed by American occupation troops such as the water cure and the re-concentration camps.⁴⁸ (Constantino 1970, 24)

⁴⁸ “Some of them [Americans] resorted to tortures the likes of which had not been witnessed in the Philippine before... The ‘[water] cure’ consisted in forcing a man to lie flat on his back, his mouth forced open by a stick or bayonet, and in some instances, a cartridge case. Then water, usually salty or dirty, was poured into his mouth until the stomach distended. The water was then disgorged from the stomach by making a chair of it for the

In this section I present a more nuanced interpretation of the American tradition. I do not interpret it as all good or all bad. Just like the traditions that have come before it there has been both good and bad, and the task is identifying which is which, especially insofar as they complement or clash with the other dominant traditions of the Philippines.⁴⁹ In particular I consider the American establishment of the public education system and a democratic government to be “uncontestable” goods, in the sense that I cannot see how one can advocate for a Philippines without these goods and say that things would be better than they already are. However, I consider the culture of “exclusive individualism” (part of the subject matter of the education and not the educational system *per se*) to be hostile to Filipino ethical concepts, especially the concept of *kapwa*. As we will see later, many Filipino scholars identify this as one of the thorns of the American tradition (section 2.3.2).

The first attempts to theorize about Filipino ethical concepts as “values” was due to the American modern tradition. It would not have been possible without the educational system they put in place in the early 20th century and the academic training received by many Filipino scholars in the US. Even though I clearly do not agree with the values framework utilized or the resulting modernist interpretations, I recognize the worth of the research done in simply identifying and objectively describing Filipino ethical concepts. If the American tradition had not been introduced then these ethical concepts would have been left “unarticulated.” As it is however, thanks to the efforts of pioneering scholars, both Filipino and American, we have a wealth of material to consult, both to affirm in some respects and criticize in others, as will be evident in Chapters 3 and 4.

Finally, understanding the policies of the American modern tradition in the Philippines will help explain the current state of confusion and disarray of the three traditions of the Philippines, their conflicts, and their lack of synthesis. The American modern tradition has contributed to a negative view of the older traditions, most especially the Spanish Catholic tradition, and yet these older traditions continue to exert a tremendous influence on the daily life of Filipinos. This has led to the charge of the Philippines having a “damaged culture,” but I will argue that it is rather a “hybrid culture” that is still in the process of synthesis (section 2.3.3). I will also propose that the articulation of Filipino ethical concepts as a Filipino virtue ethics is a worthwhile contribution to this process of synthesis between the three traditions (section 2.4).

soldiers to sit on. The process was repeated until the victim shouted, ‘Hold, enough!’” (Agoncillo 1960, 482; cf. Agoncillo 1990, 228-230).

⁴⁹ Agoncillo also expresses a nuanced view of the American occupation: “Universal education was stressed; public health and welfare was carried to the remote barrios; commerce, industry, and trade were given impetus; basic individual freedoms were respected; means of communication and transportation were greatly improved; and political consciousness was developed through the introduction of American political institutions and practices. Side by side with these positive results of the American occupation were the negative results: the general economic dependence on the United States, the partial loss of the racial heritage, the continuance of the colonial mentality, and a **distorted sense of values**” (Agoncillo 1990, 371; emphasis mine).

2.3.1 American education and democracy

The Americans acquired the Philippines from Spain through the Treaty of Paris in 1898, at the price of 20 million dollars (Agoncillo 1990, 212). Upon its conclusion President McKinley issued his “Benevolent Assimilation” Proclamation, which claimed US sovereign control over the Philippines (Agoncillo 1990, 214). The three-year period from 1898 to 1902 marked the Filipino-American war (Agoncillo 1990, 217-231). One of the first and most urgent projects of the Americans, even in the midst of hostilities, was to establish a public school system (Agoncillo 1990, 371-372). In the past Spain had proclaimed an Educational Decree in 1863 that sought to reform the public school system in the Philippines (Hardacker 2012, 13-15). However, given the lack of funds, facilities, teachers, and the reservation (or apathy) of the clergy, it was only partially implemented.⁵⁰ It could not compare to the efficiency and aggressiveness of the American public school system. During the three years of American military occupation alone, 1,000 new schools were established (Hardacker 2012, 19). The arrival of the first batch of American teachers on the transport ship *S. S. Thomas* in August 1901 (the teachers were nicknamed “Thomasites”) signaled a new era of education in the Philippines (Agoncillo 1990, 372). As early as 1903 Americans also established a *pensionado* (scholarship) program which brought promising Filipino students to study in the US, and have them come back to work in the Philippine civil service, a precursor of the Fulbright program which was established in 1948 (Calata 2002, 91-93). The Americans also founded the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1908 as a state-funded alternative to the dominant Catholic universities (Agoncillo 1990, 372).⁵¹

One of the main goals of the American public school system was to teach Filipinos the English language, using English textbooks, with American teachers.

The first and perhaps the master stroke in the plan to use education as an instrument of colonial policy was the decision to use English as the medium of instruction. English became the wedge that separated the Filipinos from their past and later was to separate educated Filipinos from the masses of their countrymen. English introduced the Filipinos to a strange, new world. With American textbooks, Filipinos

⁵⁰ There was a growing number of public schools in the Philippines during the final decades of Spanish colonization, though of questionable quality: 640 public schools in 1866, 1,608 schools in 1877, 2,133 schools in 1886, 2,153 schools in 1892, and 2,167 schools in 1898 (Hardacker 2012, 17-18). “The Educational Decree of 1863 had an uneven—and arguably negligible—impact on the educational experiences of the masses and was best implemented in Manila” (18).

⁵¹ Bulatao also describes the challenges that presented themselves to Catholics during American education. “With the coming of American secularism, the Filipino intellectuals found an outlet for their long-burning rancor against the Catholic Church. The American formula, “Separation of Church and State,” became the rallying cry, but the spirit behind the cry was not the reconciliative spirit of the American founding fathers but the angry, long-frustrated “Ecrasez l’Infame” of the French Revolution. Not only was there a wall between Church and State but an intense enmity. No wonder then that public school supervisors tended to be Protestants. No wonder that till the Second World War, a practicing Catholic had a hard time becoming president of the University of the Philippines. No wonder that till long after the Second World War, the secretary of education in this overwhelmingly “Catholic” country had to be a Mason” (Bulatao 1992, 15).

started learning not only a new language but also a new way of life, alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model. (Constantino 1970, 24)

Constantino complains about the abrupt shift that English produced in the culture and how Americans tried to force the Filipinos into their own image. A distinction must be made between three important elements: 1) the English language, 2) the educational system, and 3) the subject matter and cultural content of the education. It is true that the internal motivation of American education considered all these items as one single package. The first two were only means for the formation of the natives in the third. In other words, the primary goal of the American educator was to transform the native into his or her own image, into “little brown Americans.” In hindsight the cultural brainwashing is now seen as negative, especially in how it impeded an appreciation of the true uniqueness of Filipino identity constituted by other traditions besides the American. But the first two elements, the English language and the educational system, cannot easily be dismissed as negative. Literacy in the Philippines grew from 5-8% prior to the arrival of the Americans to 49.2% in 1918 and 65% in 1935 (Agoncillo 1990, 372-373). Whatever international competitiveness Filipino scholars have at present can be partly attributed to having English as an official language then until now. Given that Spanish was not taught widespread in the country, and Tagalog was yet to be hailed as a “Filipino national language” (beginning in 1937), it was beneficial that Filipinos were given access to an international language on such a wide scale, which in turn gave them access to an international literature.⁵² Constantino himself is forced to concede the merits of American education.

This does not mean, however, that nothing that was taught was of any value. We became literate in English to a certain extent. We were able to produce more men and women who could read and write. We became more conversant with the outside world, especially the American world. A more wide-spread education such as the Americans desired would have been a real blessing had their educational programme not been the handmaiden of their colonial policy. (Constantino 1970, 23)

⁵² Even after the institution of Filipino as a national language, English is still a better vehicle for inter-regional communication. “Although the ideal is to have one Filipino language and as a matter of political democracy we do have one, it should be obvious that there is no cultural consensus on this single Filipino language. The issue is debatable but I think a good case can be argued for the fact that English binds us equally, if not more, as intercommunicating communities. Whether this is ideal or not is another matter” (Miranda 1989, 16).

Joaquin also offers a profound insight as to why Filipino has been slow in becoming the main writing language; it is still tied to its oral roots. “A related mystery is the continuing ‘naivete’ of writing in the vernacular, including Tagalog. The language problem of the Filipino writer is usually posed as a choice between the native tongue and a foreign medium. But Bienvenido Lumbera has made a most perceptive redefinition of the problem: the choice is really between a *written* literature and an *oral* one. The modern writer writes to be read; it’s not so much his training in English as the readership he would reach that obliges the 20th-century Filipino to write in English. However well he may know Tagalog, he cannot write in it because, in a sense, Tagalog is not yet a written language. What Tagalog literally has is an *audience* that does not so much read print as listen to it, the way it listened to bard or storyteller in pre-Hispanic times. It’s still in the age of the ballad, not yet in the age of prose” (Joaquin 2004, 345).

The American scholars were not only concerned to pass on American values to the Filipinos, but also to understand and come to grips with the Philippines' past. The translation work of Helena Blair and James Robertson of more than 1,500 historical Spanish documents resulted in the monumental 53-volume publication *The Philippine Islands: 1493-1898*, completed in 1909, an indispensable resource for any student of Philippine history. There were numerous anthropological and ethnological studies done in the Philippines led by Henry Otley Beyer. The scientific study of the Philippine tribes was a venture that could not have been accomplished during the Spanish period.

As was mentioned, the study of Philippine values was a field pioneered by American scholars and American-trained scholars. Frank Lynch was the one who started the field of Philippine values. Mary Hollnsteiner and Charles Kaut made the first important studies of reciprocity or *utang-na-loób*. Leading Filipino scholars were trained in American universities: F. Landa Jocano obtained his PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago, Jaime Bulatao his PhD in psychology from Fordham University, and Virgilio Enriquez his PhD in psychology from Northwestern University. Since UP was founded by the Americans, many of its high-ranking professors preferred to take their PhD's in the US rather than in Europe. Filipino scholars such as Jocano and Enriquez who eventually criticized American values in favor of Filipino values could not have done their scholarly work without the training they received from American universities. American education is what gave Filipino scholars the resources and the opening to question not just the American education they received but also American culture in general.

On the other end there were people like T. H. Pardo de Tavera who embraced American education while disdaining the inheritance of the previous traditions (de Tavera 1928). He is one of those people who favor one tradition over all the rest. It is telling that Pardo de Tavera was forgotten in the rise of other politicians who advocated for Filipino nationalism. However this early Filipino nationalism was also a "thin" nationalism, in that it still failed to embrace the three traditions of the Philippines.

Alongside public education was a tutorship in democratic government. The arrival of the Americans interrupted the Filipino revolutionaries' initiative in forming their own government. Once the Americans were firmly in place it was their kind of democratic government that was the only valid form of government. "It was in the American "gaze" that much of what subjectively constitutes *nation* for Filipinos was formed" (Mojares 2006b, 12). The problem of course was that the Philippines did not share the long history of America that eventually led to their style of democracy. The Philippines did not have a George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or an Abraham Lincoln plus the two centuries of revolutions and events that led them to where the Americans already were, not to mention the British and Protestant inheritance that also gestated for several centuries before that. They naively assumed that introducing American democracy to a nation with a completely different culture, narrative and

set of traditions would instantly modernize it. As we will see later, this only led to much frustration.

It was understandable for American authorities to think that democracy can only mean the American type of democracy, and thus they foisted on the Filipinos the institutions that were valid for their own people. Indigenous institutions which could have led to the evolution of **native democratic ideas and institutions** were disregarded. No wonder, we, too, look with hostility upon countries who try to develop their own political institutions according to the needs of their people without being bound by Western political procedures. **We have been made to believe in certain political doctrines as absolute and the same for all peoples.** (Constantino 1970, 26-27; emphasis mine)

Agoncillo also says:

Before the end of Harrison's term, the American colonial administration would notice that only the form of democracy was in evidence. The essence of democracy had yet to be developed. The Filipino values, rooted in ancient traditions, continued to manifest their influence in the actual operation of the new democracy. Even the elite, who had already been coopted by colonialism, had not abandoned their traditional values which had kept their ties with Filipino society unaffected. Consequently, American colonial officials who continued to occupy the top level of the bureaucracy began to see the dichotomy of Western and traditional values creating the "undergrowths" of democracy. The Americans regarded **the persistence of traditional values as counter productive to the new democracy.** (Agoncillo 1990, 312; emphasis mine)

Here we see the conflict between traditions, namely, the older pre-modern traditions and the modern American tradition. The older traditions, with their centuries of existence in the Philippines, had a strong enough influence to bend the new institutions introduced by the Americans. "The passion for the rule of law, which the Americans exemplified, was regarded by the Filipinos as subordinate to the old system based on ritual kinship, *pakikisama*, *utang na loob* and other values which had preserved harmony in the native society" (Agoncillo 1990, 312-313). The specific "values" which Agoncillo names, *pakikisama* and *utang-na-loób*, are treated in Chapter 4. I will also talk about the role that the exploitation of *utang-na-loób* plays in Philippine government corruption (section 4.3.4).

It is interesting to consider what "native democratic ideas and institutions" could possibly be restored to give due respect to the older traditions, without compromising the spirit of democracy and human rights.⁵³ The problem is in coming

⁵³ There are huge challenges involved here. As Joaquin laments, "Philippine society, as though fearing bigness, ever tends to revert to the condition of the *barangay*: of the small enclosed society... What we're admitting is that, on the big scale, we can't be efficient; we are capable only of the small. The decentralization and barrio-autonomy movement expresses our craving to return to the one unit of society we feel adequate to: the *barangay*, with its 30 to a hundred families. Anything larger intimidates. We would deliberately limit ourselves to the small performance. This attitude, an immemorial one, explains why we're finding it so hard to become a nation, and why our pagan forefathers could not even imagine the task" (Joaquin 2004, 357).

up with a truly “Filipino democracy” which does not try to be merely a carbon copy of American democracy but which is in tune with the culture of Filipinos.

2.3.2 Exclusive individualism

Filipino scholars are almost unanimous in their condemnation of the “individualism” promoted by American culture. A distinction must be made between the moderate individualism that is simply a concern for the welfare and fulfilment of the individual, and an excessive individualism that promotes freedom and self-assertion as a fundamentally *higher* priority than the welfare and good of the community. “Individualism sees in the individual the supreme and fundamental good, to which all interests of the community or the society have to be subordinated” (Wojtyla 1979, 273). The rhetoric of individualism is complex because it can deftly weave in between moderation and excess depending on the opportunity. Sometimes it talks about individual rights and freedoms that are “basic,” such as the right to vote, the right to education, etc. But in an instant it can switch into an existentialist mode *a la* Nietzsche or Sartre that raises the individual over and against the “crowd,” its institutions, and its traditions. The first is compatible with *kapwa* and Filipino virtue ethics, but the latter is not. In this section when I talk about individualism it is the kind of individualism that sets itself *above* the welfare of the whole community. Taylor, who traces and catalogues the various strains of individualism, labels this an “individualism of self-fulfilment.” I prefer to call it an “exclusive individualism” in the sense that it can virtually “exclude” anything or anyone outside the self in the consideration of what constitutes the good life.

[The] principle is something like this: everyone has a right to develop their own form of life, grounded on their own sense of what is really important or of value. People are called upon to be true to themselves and to seek their own self-fulfillment. What this consists of, each must, in the last instance, determine for him- or herself. No one else can or should try to dictate its content.

This is a familiar enough position today. It reflects what we could call the individualism of self-fulfilment, which is widespread in our times and has grown particularly strong in Western societies since the 1960’s... This individualism involved a centring on the self and a concomitant shutting out, or even unawareness, of the greater issues or concerns that transcend the self, be they religious, political, historical. As a consequence, life is narrowed and flattened.⁵⁴ (Taylor 1991, 14)

The condemnation by Filipino scholars is not so much of individualism *tout court* but exclusive individualism as it clashes with the familial and relational emphases of the older, long-standing traditions. “The new values of individualism are coming up, but are clashing with old family-oriented values” (Bulatao 1992,

⁵⁴ Earlier he also says: “The dark side of individualism is a centring on the self, which both flattens and narrows lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society” (Taylor 1991, 4).

197).⁵⁵ Filipinos are taught that “individualism” is more modern and that family and collective values are tied to old traditions that must be discarded.

The Western world today... takes for granted that individualism is a higher stage of development than tribalism or any model that emphasizes the group at the expense of the individual. We in Asia, as a result probably of centuries of the industrial and technological superiority of the West and of a resulting imperialistic-colonialistic mentality, find ourselves, when educated by the West, in the dilemma of having to accept Western individualistic ideals, ethics, and life goals, while at the same time remaining an integral part of our primary groups with our roots deeply intertwined. (Bulatao 1992, 92)

Miranda practically also says the same thing:

The Western tradition found value in individuality, but also discovered its distortion in the extreme. That is why there is a nostalgia, if not a need to recover the value of community. Even if our own Philippine tradition might need a bit more individualization, we have not yet fully given the values of relatedness their due. That relatedness is the relationship of *pakikipagkapwa-tao* [relating to others as *kapwa*]. (Miranda 2003, 103)

Jocano also points out how education has played a part in inculcating these individualist tendencies in the Filipino:

By cultural orientation, we are relationists, not individualists... Our current claim to individualism is not part of our traditional culture. It is derived from the Western-influenced formal education we received when we were young. In schools, for example, we were trained to become individualists—i.e., taught to value independence and self-reliance. This new orientation is later reinforced by our exposure to Western-influenced media and the nature of the businesses we are engaged in as adults and professionals. Thus, we encourage individualism—i.e., a mind-your-own-business attitude—in our professional workplaces. But we disdain it in our personal and community affairs. (Jocano 1997, 63)

As de Guia laments, individualism has stunted the expansion of *kapwa*. Whereas the idea of *kapwa* was to expand to accommodate other people as part of a greater tribe or family, exclusive individualism constricts that to make one's circle of concern smaller and smaller. “Rather than the shared Self, it's the expanded Ego... The all-inclusive *kapwa*, now, extends only to immediate kin and friends” (de Guia 2005, 367). She also attributes this in large part to American education.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Mercado, who generalizes *kapwa* through his broader concept of *sakop*, is also clear: “Sakop thinking is quite contrary to the Western (especially American) thinking” (Mercado 1979, 48).

⁵⁶ The individualism of self-fulfillment is transmitted not just through formal education, but also through cultural media, such as television and the Internet. One cannot also underestimate the role that media plays in the formation of Filipino values. “There is another aspect of American influence which begun to be felt even in earlier times but which constitutes a particular problem today. American popular culture promotes its values, particularly rugged individualism, patriotic unilateralism, crass materialism, sexual hedonism and others, through films, TV programs, video and pop music and other media forms” (Miranda 2003, 195).

As the intellectual training progressed, the deeper Pinoy [Filipino] core values eroded gradually, while more and more Filipinos succumbed to that clever device and drudged toward the brave new world of a *kapwa*-less society. (de Guia 2005, 365)

Individualism hampers the expansive element in *kapwa* and Filipino virtue ethics in general. As indicated, there was already an internal push towards expansiveness outside the tribe and the family. Individualism curtails that, even as democracy seems to encourage it. This is why it is important to reconceive democracy not in terms of individualism but in terms of the indigenous *kapwa* mentality.

Some observers have pointed out that Philippine society is a collection of clans with selfish interests. The writer disagrees with this judgment because the concept of Filipino is evolving and regional alliances are being surmounted. The Filipino has the mechanism to establish *sakops* [*kapwa*] everywhere. He can also enlarge his vision of *sakop* [*kapwa*] so that it may embrace the whole nation.⁵⁷ (Mercado 1976, 102)

It is clear from this discussion that for Filipino scholars individualism is the main culprit for the erosion and stunting of what has been called Filipino “values.” In terms of a potential synthesis of traditions, it is one of the biggest “wrench in the works,” so to speak, which prevents the three wheels from turning in synchronization. Even foreigners like Senden (a Belgian priest) are able to diagnose the problem:

There is, however, something lacking in your culture. I said that you have very beautiful values, but **there is often a lack of synthesis in them; there should be a unity.** I told you that the country is divided into isolated families; the family is divided into isolated members; and now I tell you that the cultural system is divided into isolated values. **You see here the fragmentary and clipping effect of individualism.**⁵⁸ (Senden 1974, 50; emphasis mine)

I will suggest later that the articulation and systematization of Filipino ethical concepts as a Filipino virtue ethics can contribute to this synthesis that Senden talks about (section 2.4). Individualism easily confuses so-called Filipino “values” simply because the nature of these “values” and the proper connections between them are not well-defined. How can one reasonably defend traditional Filipino ethical concepts against the powerful influence of extreme individualism when one is not even sure what these Filipino ethical concepts *are* and how they are supposed to work together? As it is, Filipino “values” as they are currently described tend to clash

⁵⁷ By *sakop* he means *kapwa* taken in a supra-regional sense.

⁵⁸ The assumptions of Senden however are mistaken. He criticizes what he calls “social individualism” as though it was a fixed trait of Filipino culture, not realizing that its natural expansion was in fact impeded by the advent of American individualism itself. However, his criticisms are still insightful in how he identifies the disorganization of the Filipino values. “How does the value-synthesis come about? There must be a binding principle. You have the three values [*utang na loob, hiya, pakikisama*] – they have to be bound together. What is it that binds them into a synthesis? It is the common good of the country... It is the common good of the country that makes the synthesis which is the opposite of individualism” (Senden 1974, 52-53).

against each other. “Values are smashed against values; norms against values; norms against other norms. Nowhere does this become so evident as in the ambivalence of purported Filipino values: *hiya*, *utang na loob*, *pakikisama at bahala na*” (Miranda 1992, 250). This “ambivalence,” as I pointed out earlier (section 1.4.2), is due to the ambivalence of the term “value” itself, which is an evaluative term that can be mistaken for a definition. Filipino “values” still lack a sharper, more well-defined, unifying framework. Virtue ethics can provide that framework.

The American psychologist George Guthrie writing in the 1960s clearly saw the difference then between American individualism and the family values of the Filipino. He even listed some of the negative psychiatric consequences of individualism.

The problem of dependency in the middle classes of Western society with their emphasis on independence and individual striving has received a great deal of psychiatric attention. As individuals, Westerners struggle with their dependent needs, develop ulcers, exaggerated reaction formations, and many other symptoms. The whole society encourages individual effort and honors individual accomplishment. The struggle for independence and freedom from the control of others can greatly influence the formation of personality patterns.

There is a marked contrast in the Philippines where family solidarity requires each individual to submerge his own personal interests for those of the larger group. From childhood he learns to enjoy being taken care of and realizes that he can make others happy by being dependent on them... Achievements and failures are therefore family products. The society honors the family which achieves; it approves the individual who works within the family context and who experiences the interests of the family as his own. (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966, 98)

I concede that the tribal and familial mentality of Filipinos can also be taken to the extreme, where a member is required to “submerge his own personal interests for those of the larger group” as mentioned in the quote above, even to the detriment of the person’s basic rights. This is why I do not say that all “individualism” is bad, such as a moderate individualism that safeguards basic human rights (for example, the right to choose whom to marry or the rights of women to pursue professional careers). These rights are “balanced” in that they do not put the individual over and above the community; but rather, they conceivably benefit both the individual and the larger community as a whole. They are also rights that are compatible with Filipino ethical concepts such as *kapwa*. Exclusive individualism, however, places the individual above the community. The individual is encouraged to pursue particular goals in indifference of the community or to the disadvantage of the community, and this is clearly unacceptable from the point of view of the older traditions.

2.3.3 Three traditions in confusion

The aggressive political, educational and cultural policies of the Americans inculcated a negative view of the two previous traditions. The American way of life and American ideals became new standards which many Filipinos aspired to. The sentiment of Filipinos who wanted to accept the American tradition in its entirety is clearly voiced by T. H. Pardo de Tavera. He called the superstitions of the old animism and the Spanish missionaries a “heritage of ignorance,” which must be disowned in favor of the “logical mentality” acquired through “lay education” (Pardo de Tavera 1928).⁵⁹ Pardo de Tavera was also an advocate of “statehood” of the Philippines under the sovereignty of the US (Mojares 2006a, 150). He was an example of those who favor the modern tradition above all and consider it the standard by which to judge the older traditions.

However, a perfect example of the frustration that can arise when one ignores or dismisses the other traditions of the Philippines in favor of the American modern tradition is shown in the article “A Damaged Culture: A New Philippines?,” which stirred a lot of controversy at the time (Fallows 1987). In addition to the disappointment with the Philippines for not living up to American expectations, Fallows also compared the Philippines with the other more economically vibrant countries of Southeast Asia which did not receive the “benefit” of American tutelage.

Americans would like to believe that **the only colony we ever had--a country that modeled its institutions on ours** and still cares deeply about its relations with the United States--is progressing under our wing. It's not, for reasons that go far beyond what the Marcoses did or stole. The countries that surround the Philippines have become the world's most famous showcases for the impact of culture on economic development. Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore--all are short on natural resources, but all (as their officials never stop telling you) have clawed their way up through hard study and hard work. Unfortunately for its people, the Philippines illustrates the contrary: **that culture can make a naturally rich country poor**. There may be more miserable places to live in East Asia--Vietnam, Cambodia--but there are few others where **the culture itself, rather than a communist political system, is the main barrier to development**. The culture in question is Filipino, but it has been heavily shaped by nearly a hundred years of the ‘Fil-Am relationship.’ The result is apparently the only non-communist society in East Asia in which the average living standard is going down. (Fallows 1987; emphasis mine)

⁵⁹ The pro-American stance of Pardo de Tavera is summarized by Mojares: “His lavish praise for American education was grounded in a manichean view of the country's intellectual situation. On one hand, there was the intellectually benighted Spanish era; on the other, the promise of American enlightenment. Focused on producing pious Christians and docile colonials. Spanish education was narrow and medieval... It cultivated persons lacking in the capacity for rational, autonomous action and left a legacy of *ignorantismo*. Filipino colonial culture consisted of a medieval literature of devotional books (*novenas*, *pasyon*) and exotic romances (*awit*, *corrido*) as well as religious and social practices that fostered fanaticism and supernaturalism” (Mojares 2006a, 186).

In the rest of his article Fallows actually mentions everything that one needs to know in order to answer why the Philippines did not perform as expected. He explicitly mentions the tribal Southeast Asian culture, the 400 (sic) years of Spanish colonization, and the nearly hundred years of American influence (and partial colonization). The rather naïve expectation is that after nearly a century of American tutelage the Philippines should by now have become an economic and democratic powerhouse in Southeast Asia. That it has failed to become one in the time allotted means there is a serious defect in the culture itself. He, along with many others, underestimate the influence and persistence of the older traditions that make up Filipino culture. They also fail to consider that there are elements in the older traditions which would be incompatible or resistant to the American tradition. You cannot just introduce a brand new American tradition on Filipino culture and hope for it to wipe the slate clean of the past. In some ways the US continues to make this same mistake in the Middle East, which has constantly disappointed their expectations due to the dominant Islamic tradition (entrenched for more than a millennium) which has elements discordant with pure American democracy.

Fallows makes a comparison with Japan. He is amazed at how Japan has made tremendous economic progress from almost nothing while the Philippines after being coddled for so long has repeatedly fallen into decline. In this aspect however the Americans did the Japanese a favor by not “colonizing” Japan after World War II. Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945 and was occupied by the Americans until April 28, 1952 (Huffman 2010, 110-113). This seven-year period also witnessed American attempts to modernize and democratize Japan (ironically, there was a reluctance for American Protestant missionaries to “Christianize” Japan due to resentment, in contrast to their strong tendency to do so in the Philippines which was already Catholic). But afterwards Japan was given the opportunity to develop their government and economy on Japanese terms. “Once again, Japan was a sovereign country, free to pursue its own course” (Huffman 2010, 113). It was able to return to its Japanese identity this time with Western resources. The Japanese culture was already obviously strong prior to the war, strong enough to be an empire. It was a “homogenous” culture, so to speak, with all aspects of society, from the Buddhist and Shinto religions, to the Bushido code of the military, contributing to an internally synchronized entity.

Compare this with the Filipino culture, which was still in a state of conflict and synthesis when the Americans arrived. Just when the Filipinos were beginning to synthesize the two older traditions, a third tradition arrived and proclaimed itself supreme. The Southeast Asian tradition admonishes the Filipino to value the tribe and family beyond all else, the Spanish tradition asks them to be devout Catholics, and the American tradition educates them into individualism and Protestantism (or secularism). It should not be any surprise that Filipino culture would be, for a long time, in a state of shock. The Filipino culture is not so much a “damaged culture” as it is an “unsynthesized culture.” It synthesis will still take some time.

One response against the exaltation of the American modern tradition is the opposite attitude—that is, glorifying the “original” Southeast Asian tradition above all the rest. This attitude runs in varying degrees among the Filipino nationalists. It is the hope to retrieve the pre-colonial tradition of the Philippines and to use that as the grounds for Filipino nationalism. The precedents for this kind of attitude can be traced to the *La Antigua Civilizacion Tagalog* of Pedro Paterno (1887) and Rizal’s annotations of the *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* of Antonio de Morga ([1890] 1962), which hoped to show that there was already a thriving civilization in the Philippines long before the Spanish arrived. Unfortunately, Paterno’s work has long been debunked as historical fiction (Mojares 2006a, 46-68), and archeological evidence has proven many of Rizal’s speculations to be false (Ocampo 1998, 196-202). Nevertheless this attitude retains its appeal until today. Joaquin calls this the valorization of “aboriginal purity.”

Aboriginal purity is the phantom that haunts us. We ache back to a time when the Filipino heart was Philippine, uncorrupted, undistorted, unencrusted by foreign cancer. We read rape into the day when, as Rizal said, we were forced to accept a religion and a culture we could not understand. What followed we reject as *our* history, though it was our evolution into a people, our assimilation of the religion and culture thrust upon us. But, no, the 300 years of Spain was an irrelevant interruption. Filipinos resumed their own history only in the later 1800s, with the Propagandists. (Joaquin 2004, 75)

This quest for “aboriginal purity” is complemented by the left-leaning, anti-colonial rhetoric of historians such as Renato Constantino (1975), which condemns both the Spanish and American colonial traditions for their exploitation of the country. The problem with “aboriginal purity” is that it rests on weak ground because as I have shown above, Filipino written history would not have even been possible without the contributions of the Spanish tradition (section 2.2.1), along with the fact that there really was no great ancient civilization in the Philippines prior to the arrival of the Spanish and written literature was virtually non-existent. In other words, those who adopt the attitude of “aboriginal purity” have very little to draw on, and may be tempted to fabricate a historical fiction as well.

In contrast to these two extreme attitudes, I endorse the attitude of Nick Joaquin, a “national artist” of the Philippines. I think that Joaquin is the closest to exemplifying a synthesis between the three traditions. Though he was more well-known for his literary output, and is considered by some as the greatest Filipino literary writer in English in the 20th century, he was also a historian.⁶⁰ He was one of the few historians who explicitly defended the Spanish Catholic tradition (the most maligned tradition of the three) by stressing its important contributions (cf. Joaquin 2004, 405-406). According to him, it was the Spanish which gave the Philippines a unifying identity. “Before 1521 we could have been anything and everything *not*

⁶⁰ His historical essays are collected in *Culture and History* (2004), *La Naval de Manila and Other Essays* (1998), and *A Question of Heroes* (2005).

Filipino; after 1565 we can be nothing *but* Filipino” (Joaquin 2004, 21). And yet while defending the importance of the Spanish tradition, he also dealt with the tensions and transformative encounters between the three traditions.⁶¹ His metaphor of the encounter between cultures as a “chemical reaction” is informative:

We Filipinos tend to believe that culture is simple addition, history is mere addition. We ourselves are, or were, a fixed original identity to which certain things – alien cultures, alien histories – have been added, layer upon layer. Therefore, if culture is tradition, identity is subtraction. All we have to do is remove all those imposed layers and we shall end up with the true basic Filipino identity. That is the static view of identity. But culture is *not* simple addition. Culture is not a stew to which you can add anything and it will still remain a stew. Rather culture is like those laboratory experiments in chemistry where **the moment you add a new ingredient the original mixture becomes completely transformed into something different.** (Joaquin 2004, 395; emphasis mine)

Instead of a “damaged culture” as Fallows calls it, I would instead call Philippine culture a “hybrid culture” still in the process of synthesis, still in the process of transformation. A crucial step in the process of synthesis is the acceptance of all three traditions as formative of Philippine identity. Such synthesis is impeded by the attitude that proclaims one tradition as supreme above the rest, or which denies the contributions and influence of any of the traditions. What is commendable in Joaquin is that he acknowledges the “hybridity” of Philippine culture and encourages an acceptance of this hybridity, whereas others insist on an incomplete picture. As Bulatao also says: “There is no such thing as a foreign culture. We are what we are... The Filipino way of life is the sum of our national experiences. The only un-Filipino aspect of life is when we shut out part of reality and deny part of what we are.” (Bulatao 1992, 201). In the context of Philippine culture, many of the things which people still consider as “foreign” have already been syncretized and inextricably absorbed. The task now is to try and make more sense of the various elements and make them more harmonious. In this dissertation I will basically be adopting the general attitude of Joaquin in accepting all three traditions as constitutive of Philippine culture. Furthermore, I intend Filipino virtue ethics to be a worthwhile contribution to further synthesizing these three traditions.

The discussion of the American modern tradition was important to understand its contribution to the theorization of Filipino ethical concepts as “values.” However, this tradition also introduced a conflict between these “values” and a certain brand of individualism, which I have called “exclusive individualism.” The aggressive political, educational, and cultural policies of the American tradition have left the three traditions in disarray, and it is quite common to find those who extol one particular tradition at the expense of the rest. I mentioned that a step towards synthesis is a “Nick Joaquin attitude,” which acknowledges the importance of all three traditions in

⁶¹ For example, the tensions and transformations between the Southeast Asian tradition and the Spanish tradition are present in his famous play “Summer Solstice” or “Tatarin” (Joaquin 2011); and between the two older traditions and the American tradition in his short story, “Candido’s Apocalypse” (Joaquin 2010).

constituting Philippine identity. With this attitude, we can insist that Philippine culture is not a “damaged culture” but a “hybrid culture” still in the process of synthesis.

2.4 Filipino virtue ethics as a synthesis of three traditions

I believe that the project of Filipino virtue ethics is a contribution to the synthesis of the three traditions of the Philippines. First of all, it explicitly acknowledges the debt of the three traditions: the concepts and raw material come from the syncretization of the first two traditions, while the theorization comes from the third tradition. This recognition is an important first step. Second, it uses a crucial element from the middle tradition, namely Thomism, to connect the middle tradition with both the older tribal-animist tradition and the newer modern tradition. The importance of the tribal-animist worldview, the Catholic (Thomist) system of thought, and the academic research provided by American education, are all respected in this endeavor.

There are contemporary movements in Filipino scholarship which have also tried to contribute to this process of synthesis. The two key words are “indigenization” and “inculturation.” “Indigenization” was the rallying cry of Filipino social scientists, especially Virgilio Enriquez (*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*), Zeus Salazar (*pantayong pananaw*), and Prospero Cover (*Pilipinolohiya*).⁶² It was a way to approach the social sciences such as psychology, history, and anthropology not from a dominant Western perspective but from a Filipino perspective. In this sense it can be seen as an attempt to synthesize the 20th century social sciences (inherited from the American tradition) with the Filipino traditions. Jocano describes the “synergy” of “indigenization” when he says:

We can select the best from the outside (e.g., Western science), harness the best from our traditional culture, and synergize them into a new sociocultural orientation for the 21st century. We can be modern without sacrificing our indigenous identity to the idol of modernity. (Jocano 1998a, 2017)

“Inculturation” meanwhile is a term derived from Catholicism, especially after the Vatican II council which emphasized a respect for local languages and culture.⁶³ Pope John Paul II defined inculturation as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.”⁶⁴ The closed attitudes of the past gave

⁶² For a summary of Filipino Psychology see “*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Filipino Psychology): A Legacy of Virgilio G. Enriquez” (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000). See also “Indigenization of Psychology in the Philippines” (Church and Katigbak 2002).

⁶³ The term “inculturation” was first coined by Joseph Masson in his 1962 article, “L’église ouverte sur le monde.” It was officially adopted in the Vatican document *Catechesi tradendae*, n. 53, October 1979, and has since then gained theological currency.

⁶⁴ *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 52.

way to incorporating native concepts into missionary activity, liturgy, and theology. The Jesuit scholars Jaime Bulatao and Albert Alejo, priests of the *Societas Verbi Divini* Dionisio Miranda and Leonardo Mercado, as well as lay Filipino theologians like Jose de Mesa, are prime movers of this movement in the Philippines.⁶⁵ “Inculturation is the internal freedom residing in the people of a particular culture to choose for themselves the most suitable embodiment and expression of Christian revelation” (Bulatao 1992, 48).⁶⁶ It is the acknowledgement that Christianity can learn many things from the indigenous cultures which would enrich Christianity itself.⁶⁷ It is a more humble approach on the part of Western Christianity, to not think of itself as superior and complete. On the other hand, it also strives to avoid the dangers of what Joaquin calls “aboriginal purity.”

Inculturation is not a rejection in principle of all that is Western in the interests of indigenous constructs; that would reduce it to ideology. Inculturation recognizes that in certain instances the contribution of a particular culture may in fact be achievement at the level of the universally human rather than of the distinctively ethnic (Miranda 2003, 144).

All cultures have something to contribute to our understanding of what it means to be human. The Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition need not be seen as an “inferior” tradition, but something that can highlight important aspects of human existence. Later I will argue that one of its greatest contributions is the intense emphasis on “human relationships,” something which has slowly been neglected in the individualism of the West.

Like I mentioned, Thomism in the Philippines has yet to be “inculturated.” For the longest time, it was in its rigid scholastic form which could not be tampered with in the same way as the *Pasyon* (Passion of Christ) play was freely appropriated by the Filipino masses. However, the active use of Aquinas to articulate and organize Filipino ethical concepts in this dissertation is clearly an example of “inculturation.”

I interpret “indigenization” roughly as an attempt to reconcile the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition with the American modern tradition, and “inculturation” roughly as an attempt to reconcile the Southeast Asian tradition with the Spanish Catholic tradition. Combining both approaches, one can form a

⁶⁵ For samples of inculturation in a Philippine context see: *Inculturation and Filipino Theology* (Mercado 1992), “Tasks in the Inculturation of Theology: The Filipino Catholic Situation” (de Mesa 1998), and *Towards the Inculturation of the Salesian Family Spirit in the Filipino Context* (Gustilo 1989).

⁶⁶ “Inculturation, a neologism, is a combination of two different concepts. One is enculturation, or the process by which an individual becomes part of a given culture; it is parallel to, but not synonymous with socialization or the process by which an individual becomes part of a given society. The other is acculturation, which is the process that occurs when two cultures (rather than societies) come in contact with each other and exchange items and units from each other. Inculturation draws from both ideas insofar as it is a process wherein the acculturated is encultured with greater consciousness of the distinction between the original and borrowed cultural items. The concerns of normativity (whether assimilation is desirable or acceptable, what its substance is and degree, etc.) will depend on the discipline” (Miranda 1992, 5).

⁶⁷ “Inculturation should seek to reconsider rather than exclude the foreign culture’s contribution. But such contribution should enrich rather than suffocate” (Bulatao 1992, 48).

conception of what it means to synthesize three traditions all together. The articulation of a Filipino virtue ethics falls in line with both movements of “indigenization” and “inculturation.”

To conclude, this chapter was important because Filipino ethical concepts were the product of the syncretization of the first two traditions: the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition, while the theorization and scholarly research on these ethical concepts as “values” must be credited to the American tradition. An extensive discussion of the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition was important in the absence of any ancient canon or written text from the pre-Hispanic period. We must rely largely on a knowledge of the cultural and historical context of that period. A discussion of the Spanish Catholic tradition was important to show how Filipino ethical concepts were expanded by Christian doctrine, and to show that these concepts, insofar as they are products of a “medieval time warp,” are definitely “pre-modern” concepts. It also justified the use of Thomism as a prime dialogue partner for the articulation of these Filipino ethical concepts. The discussion of the American modern tradition was important to give credit to American education for the scholarly work on Filipino “values,” but at the same time it explains why the three traditions are in confusion and disarray. In light of this important historical background, we can now proceed with the articulation and organization of Filipino ethical concepts as a “Filipino virtue ethics.”

3 The Two Pillars of Filipino Virtue Ethics: *Loób* and *Kapwa*

In this chapter I will articulate the major concepts of Filipino virtue ethics with the help of Thomist philosophy. I will begin with what I call the “two pillars” of Filipino virtue ethics, *loób* and *kapwa*. Then I will describe the goal or *telos* of Filipino virtue ethics called *pagkakaisa*. The Filipino virtues, which will be discussed later in Chapter 4, are what will draw the *loób* and *kapwa* together towards the achievement of *pagkakaisa*.

The methodology is as follows:

1. I will criticize the current interpretations of *loób* which treat it in terms of modern “subjectivity/interiority” (section 3.1.1). As an alternative, I will use Aquinas’ metaphysical doctrine of potency and act and his psychology of “powers of the soul” to analyze *loób* (section 3.1.2). This will result in an interpretation that is more faithful to the normal meaning of *loób* as “will,” to its non-epistemological and pre-modern character and even its sense of being “inside” a person. At the same time, the use of Aquinas’ philosophy will draw out the difference between *loób* and Aquinas’ own concept of will (*voluntas*). *Loób* turns out to be a more “holistic and relational” notion of will than the *voluntas* of Aquinas (section 3.1.4).
2. I will explain that Filipino ethical concepts can be seen as “habits” of the *loób* – that is, a socially inculcated “second nature” that leads to a consistent pattern of behavior and actions (section 3.1.3). I will borrow this time from Aquinas’ own conception of “habits” and “virtues.” I will present three pieces of evidence to show that Filipino ethical concepts are truly “habits” of the *loób*: 1) the grammatical form of many Filipino ethical concepts as x-*loób* (x as a quality of the *loób*), 2) the nature of the long-term training necessary to acquire these virtues (mostly within the family) and the long-term social expectation to practice this behavior throughout one’s life, and 3) the long-term nature of human relationships as it progresses towards unity (*pagkakaisa*); one act does not make a healthy relationship but many consistent recurring acts.
3. The *loób* is in constant relation to the *kapwa*, which is the second-person perspective of *loób* (section 3.1.5). I will explain that one need not posit a *labas* (outside) for the *loób* as modern interpretations do since *kapwa* already suffices. I will also show that the problem of current conceptions of *kapwa* is that they theorized on *kapwa* without having a clear definition of *loób* (section 3.2.1). I introduce yet another borrowing from the metaphysics of Aquinas through the innovations of Norris Clarke: the notion of “substance-in-

relation” and “person-in-relation” which closely captures the relationship between *loób* and *kapwa* and which is respectful of the “connectivity” of Southeast Asian animism (section 3.2.2). I introduce this highly congruent metaphysics in order to protect *kapwa* from further modernist misinterpretations. Though there are points of similarity between *kapwa* and some modern philosophies that deal with human relationships, there are also significant differences. I will discuss Levinas, the feminist philosophy of care, and Kant (section 3.2.3).

4. Finally, after all these concepts are clarified, I will explain the goal or *telos* of Filipino virtue ethics which is unity or oneness (*pagkakaisa*) (section 2.4). It is a union between the *loób* and the *kapwa*; it is a union of wills. It is achieved through the successful practice of the Filipino virtues. It is what constitutes “happiness” within the perspective of Filipino virtue ethics.

3.1 *Loób*

Loób is the most obvious key term in Filipino virtue ethics because so many Filipino virtues are of the form x-*loób* such as *kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób*, and *lakas-ng-loób*. There are also negative descriptions of *loób* such as *masamang-loób* or *mahinang-loób*. I conceive of other virtues, such as *pakikiramdam* and *hiya* as virtues of *loób*. In short, as I will show, *loób* is the subject of the virtues; it is what the virtues affect and modify.

There is ample academic literature on *loób*. Pe-Pua (2016) has provided a helpful survey of the different authors who have tackled *loób*: Filipino philosophers (Mercado 1972, 1994; de Mesa 1986), psychologists (Alejo 1990; de Guia 2005; Enriquez 1992), historians (Salazar 1977, 1985; Iletto 1979; Rafael 1993) and a poet (Lacaba 1974). An author whom Pe-Pua did not include in her list, but whom I consider one of the most important authors on *loób* is the theologian Dionisio Miranda, who has the longest single treatment on *loób* to date (Miranda 1989). These authors have given various definitions for *loób*, usually as an “inner self,” “inner being,” “what is inside the self,” “holistic self,” “core of oneself,” “core of one’s personality,” etc. As I am about to show in this chapter, my interpretation of *loób* is completely different from the general trend so far.

Loób is simply the person’s will. This meaning is shown in the two older Spanish *Vocabularios* where it is mentioned as *voluntad* or “will” (de San Buena Ventura 1613, 671; de Noceda and de Sanlucar 1860, 193).⁶⁸ In fact, the 1860 dictionary is particularly interesting because it has two separate entries for *loób*. One

⁶⁸ Consider also its use in the 1703 Tagalog *Pasyon* play of Gaspar Aquino de Belen: “*Loob co,y di co paranin, cundi ang iyong loob din, ang siya cong totparin* [My own will I will not allow, unless it is your will also, which I will fulfill]” (Aquino de Belen 1990, 94).

entry includes “*voluntad*” among other definitions (“*Adentro, voluntad, querer, entrar al aposento* [in, will, want, enter the room]”) and the second entry defines *loób* as voluntary action (“*Hacer algo voluntariamente* [do something voluntarily]”).⁶⁹ The sense of *loób* as will or willed action has the greatest proportion overall compared to other definitions of *loób*.

In the examples given in both entries, there is conspicuously nothing of the “inner self,” “core of oneself,” etc. that 20th century Filipino scholars postulate. On the one hand, you have the physical, spatial aspect of *loób* as “inside,” whereas on the other hand, you have the non-physical aspect of will which is sometimes coupled with action. There is no clumping together of both meanings into an “inner self” or “interiority/subjectivity.” I think that the clear definitions of this early Spanish dictionary, spared from any 20th century psychologizing tendencies, is fundamentally correct.

De Castro, famous for his discussions on bioethics in the Filipino context, has also clearly translated *loób* as “will” (1998).⁷⁰ He is the most consistent among contemporary Filipino scholars with this translation and avoids any mention of an “inner self.” I prefer to modify this translation as a “holistic and relational will.” The reasons behind this translation will be explained in the following sections, but it is required to distance *loób* from modern conceptions of the will, such as the autonomous and self-legislating will found in Kant.⁷¹ *Loób* is by no means “autonomous” and independent as is the case with “will” in the modern tradition. One reason why our previous historical survey was so important was to show that the modern tradition came very late to the Philippines, only in the 20th century, and that Filipino concepts were the products of two “pre-modern” traditions, the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition. *Loób* needs to be interpreted as a mix of those traditions. Those older traditions emphasized holism

⁶⁹ The two full entries in the 1860 dictionary read: “LOOB. pp. Adentro, voluntad, querer, entrar al aposento [in, will, want, enter the room], *Linoob*. Vm. l. *Man*, entrar en alguna parte [get somewhere]. Donde ó á quien [where or to whom], *Linooban*. Mag, querer algo, ó permitirlo. Lo que, *In*. *Magpa*, meter algo dentro. Lo que, *Ipa*. Donde, *Pa-an*. *Caloob*, merced [reward/mercy]. *Magca*, hacerla [make]. Lo que, *Ipagca*. *Nag*. *Linolooban sila*, tener cada uno su querer [each have their wish]. *Calooban*, gusto [liking]. *Balang calooban mo*. *Ualang loob*, necio, cobarde [foolish, cowardly]. *Napapa*, pasando en él [going into it]. *Na*, entrar acaso [perhaps enter]. *Napaloloob*, de propósito [purpose]. *Napa*, pedir que le metan dentro [ask them to crawl inside]. LOOB. pp. Hacer algo voluntariamente [do something voluntarily]. *Magloob can gumawa: Cundi mo loob, houag kang paroon*. *Magloob bata*, amancebarse [cohabitation]. *Looban*, recámara ó aposentillo [bedroom or small room]. *Magsasalooban*, concierto de voluntades [concurrence of wills]. *Papagsaloobanin*, ser hechos [be done]. *Sinalooban co*, guarda rencor [grudge]. *Magsingloob*, concertar voluntades [arrange wills]. *Sa tanang loob*, de todo corazon. *Cun loob*, aunque [although]. *Anong loob mo?* Qué quieres? [what do you want?] *Magloob*, determinar, resolver [determine, resolve]. Lo que, *In*.” (de Noceda and de Sanlucar 1860, 193).

⁷⁰ Dionisio Miranda also says: “from a systematic point of view, [*loób*] also refers to will, volition, state of mind” (Miranda 2003, 71). However Miranda has many other definitions of *loób* besides this.

⁷¹ It is the third formulation of the categorical imperative called the “formula of autonomy”: “the Idea of the will of every rational being as a will which makes universal law” where “[the will] must be considered as also making the law for itself” (Paton 1948, 98-99). Even granting that the second formula of the categorical imperative of treating persons as ends-in-themselves is somewhat congruent with *kapwa*, the autonomous will in Kant is just too starkly different from *loób*.

and connectivity rather than individuality. *Loób* is not inherently separated from the world or from other people. Even within the *loób* itself, there is no conceived of division between reason, will and the sensitive appetite (this “holism” will be discussed more in section 3.1.4). One must explicitly differentiate *loób* from the “autonomous will” of Kant and similar modern conceptions of the will.

3.1.1 The modern Cartesian confusion

The literal translation of the word *loób* is “inside.” The word *loób* can mean the inside of physical objects like houses or pots. But the literal translation can easily confuse when we talk about the *loób* of persons. It certainly does not mean the physical insides of persons, such as their bodily organs which are called *lamang-loób*, but the “will” of the person. The confusion starts when people latch on to this literal translation of *loób* as “inside” and use all sorts of 20th century Western philosophical and psychological theories to explain *loób*, with the subjective-objective dichotomy of Descartes or Kant looming in the background. Descartes made a division between the *res cogitans* (thinking thing) and the *res extensa* (extended thing).⁷² This division was further radicalized by Kant between the *phenomena* (things as they appear) and the *noumena* (things in themselves); we only have access to *phenomena*, the *noumena* can never be known (Kant [1787] 1996a, 314). To interpret *loób* with this modern background leads to a serious distortion of *loób* because as I have mentioned above, the concept of *loób* was born and developed in traditions which were basically pre-modern, insulated from the Western subjective turn in philosophy. In fact the discrepancy can be even more glaring when we realize that the tribal and animist tradition in the Philippines is not just pre-modern, it is in fact “pre-rational,” that is, more similar to the time of Homeric epics before the birth of philosophy than any other period of Western history. Using modern theories to explain *loób* can therefore easily result in a gross caricature of it.

But many scientific disciplines from physics to psychology take this subjective-objective dichotomy for granted, and so it is not surprising that many well-meaning Filipino scholars have also tended to interpret *loób* in this light. For example, one of the earliest treatments of *loób* is Dionisio Miranda’s *Loob: The Filipino Within* (1989). He has many good insights but his analyses are often tinged with misleading modern presuppositions. On the surface he uses a linguistic approach similar to the one used by Leonardo Mercado (his confrere in the *Societas Verbi Divini*), which holds that “the values and perceptions of the society are encoded in its language – in short, a linguistic relativism” (Mercado 1976, 46). Start with the language, and then mine it word per word for philosophical insights. This aims to be more faithful to

⁷² “The notion of a thing that thinks and that of an extended or mobile thing are utterly different and independent of one another... it is self-contradictory for these things, which are clearly understood by us to be different and independent, not to be able to be established separately, at least by God. Thus, however often we find them in one and the same subject (as, for example, thought and corporeal motion in the same man), we should on that account believe that there they are one and the same not by virtue of a unity of nature, but only by virtue of a unity of composition” (Descartes 2006, 169).

Filipino philosophy as it is spoken and lived out by the culture. However, this linguistic approach cannot remain pure since the approach itself is influenced by philosophers as varied as Saussure, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein. And in the absence of any indigenous philosophical canon such as Confucius or the Upanishads which could have provided other options, Miranda is still forced to define *loób* through Western concepts. This is what he does when he says that “*loob* as a synthetic concept is the individual’s unique interiority; as an analytical concept it is the unrepeatable complex of an individual’s awareness and thought, his emotions and sense for value, his personality and character” (Miranda 1989, 3). Later on he also says: “as a noun it refers to what is interior, internal, on the inside. *Loob* more than adequately renders the philosophical concept of human interiority or subjectivity” (Miranda 2003, 71).

It is clear that Miranda takes for granted the modern bifurcation between interiority and exteriority, subjectivity and objectivity, and his discussion of *loób* is developed along these lines. From here it is not surprising that he also begins to introduce an awkward “epistemology” for *loób*:

From the philosophy of *loob* we know that data enter *loob* through *Malay* [awareness]. *Dama* [feeling] invests the data with a tone that is specific to the person. *Ugali* [attitude] pursues purposes implied in or drawn from the data. The development of conscience, therefore, depends, at least chronologically, on data entering *loob* from interaction with *labas* or objective reality. (Miranda 2003, 47)

This epistemology involves an acquisition of “data” from the outside world of objective reality which is entered into the interior and subjective *loób*. What is produced is a modern “caricature” of *loób* rather than a genuine understanding of *loób*. The truth is that *loób* does not entertain a division between subjective and objective reality. It is completely innocent of the “epistemological turn” in modern philosophy where one is concerned about how knowledge and certainty is obtained. Mercado, one of the first pioneers of Filipino philosophy, also initially took the subjectivity and objectivity division for granted and said that “the Filipino wants to harmonize the object and the subject” (Mercado 1976, 191). But years later he would change his mind about this and deny that Filipinos have the dichotomy altogether. “Do Filipinos also have the object-subject dichotomy? We suspect that the answer is no” (Mercado 1994, 53).

To properly understand *loób* one must first rescue it from Cartesianism. One of the reasons why Aquinas is relevant is because his is a pre-modern philosophy that does not accept the subjective-objective divide of Descartes. To be fair to Miranda, he still manages to redeem himself through his extensive discussion about the integral relationship between *loób* and *kapwa*, and he has a lot of insightful things to say about certain Filipino virtues. Nevertheless he represents a trend that haunts most of the 20th century scholarship on *loób*. When it is not stated explicitly as a division between interiority and exteriority or subjectivity and objectivity, it is present more

subtly in the talk about a *labas* (“outside”). Miranda switches to this terminology when he says:

There is no *loob* possible without *labas*; *labas* is part of the very definition of *loob* as condition of *loob*. Without *labas* constituting *loob* there would be no possible discourse of value. Thus the “metaphysics” of *loob* through *labas* has an ethical significance; without *labas* valuing would be a solipsistic project, anchored only in the inner self, unrelated to and untouched by external reality which itself is the source of other true (if not immediately moral) values. (Miranda 1992, 68)

The use of *labas* or “outside” or “outer world” has become quite common in the social sciences such as psychology or anthropology. The error is subtle because one may say that since *loób* means “inside” then there must certainly be a corresponding “outside.” And yet there are modern presuppositions moving in the background which automatically reduce this to subjectivity and objectivity. For example, Miranda will explicitly say: “*Labas* is also material-physical reality, i.e., the actual and real world” (Miranda 1992, 85). *Labas* can instantly turn into a scientific view of the world which was unheard of in the two older traditions which produced *loób*.

Another well-meaning scholar who seems to have been tricked by the specter of *labas* is the anthropologist Prospero Covar. Appealing to the “manunggul jar,” a burial jar discovered in the caves of Palawan Island and dated to 890 B.C., he speculates that

The Filipino views the *katawan* [body] as a vessel not unlike the Manunggul Jar. The Filipino *katawan* has a *labas* (externality), *loob* (internality), and *lalim* (depth). The *lalim* is where the *kaluluwa* resides.... The Filipino has a complex personhood (*pagkatao*) associated with body parts contrasted in binary opposition, namely (1) *panlabas* [external] and (2) *panloob* [internal]. (Covar 1998, 23)

By “body parts” he refers to an earlier analogy between the face and the internal organs (Covar 1998, 11-13). There are of course quite serious problems with forming a view of “complex personhood” on the basis of either an ancient jar or certain body parts. But he seems to get away with it because the meaning of *loób* as “inside” gives him justification to posit the *labas* as “outside,” and the jar only serves as a convenient symbol for him to make the whole inside-outside arrangement sound “ancient.” To be fair, Covar’s commendable interest in indigenous religions apparently makes him want to emphasize the mysterious and hidden dimensions of the Filipino psyche, which also explains why he mentions the “depth” of the person in addition to the “inside” and “outside.” But anyone can see that the jar is only a foil for a simple anthropological assertion, that personhood is composed of a “binary opposition” between “internality” and “externality.” I argue that this assertion, when it comes to *loób*, is a mistake.

One other clue that this dichotomy should not hold is when we survey the Philippine languages. Mercado was the first to identify the counterparts of the

Tagalog *loób* in other major Philippine languages, specifically the Ilokano *nakem* and the Bisayan *buot* (Mercado 1976, 54). Miranda also agreed with these similarities when he said, “I believe that the essence of *loob* is basically the same as that of the Ilokano *nakem* and the Bisayan *buot*” (Miranda 1989, 18). However, the twist is that in a later study Mercado would indicate that “the contrast on *loob* and *labas* is only in Tagalog” (Mercado 1994, 36), meaning that *nakem* and *buot* do not mean “inside” and thus do not connote an “outside” by default. If the counterparts of *loób* in other Philippine languages do not have the alternative meaning of a physical, spatial “inside,” does that mean it was only a coincidence that the Tagalog *loób* should have this meaning and the meaning of “will?” I do not know the answer. However, it gives us more reason not to haphazardly combine the two definitions but to keep them separate and distinct. It is to Mercado’s credit that he thoroughly denies the dichotomy between the inside and outside of a person not just with *loób* but also with its counterparts in other Philippine languages.

But the Filipino does not think in either-or categories. His is both/and in his spirit of harmony. We said that since *loob* (and *buot*, as well as *nakem*) has a holistic concept of the body, there is no dichotomy between the inside and the outside of the person. (Mercado 1994, 37)

In the next section I will present a pre-modern alternative to this “binary opposition” between internality and externality, subjectivity and objectivity.

3.1.2 *Loób* as *voluntas ut potentia animae* (the will as a power of the soul)

I will now use the Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysical doctrine of potency and act and the Thomist psychology of powers (*potentiae*) of the soul to interpret *loób*. I intend to present a better alternative that 1) respects the meaning of *loób* as “will,” 2) avoids the modern Cartesian confusion of subjectivity and objectivity, and 3) still somehow accounts for the *loób* as “inside.” This attempt serves as a preparation for presenting Filipino ethical concepts as “habits” of the *loób* (section 3.1.3), and subsequently, as Filipino “virtues.”

A seed has the potency (*potentia*) to become a tree. When it finally becomes a tree this potency is actualized. A man has the potency to play the piano. If he gets a good teacher and practices hard then this potency can be actualized. A block of marble has the potency to become a statue of David, and it only takes a skilled sculptor to turn this into an actual statue. In a figurative sense one can say that a tree is “inside” the seed, or a violinist is “inside” the man, or a statue of David is “inside” the block of marble, but these potencies have yet to be actualized. When they are finally actualized, this serves as conclusive proof that they were hidden potencies all along. Potency reveals itself through act. One cannot know or observe the potency

alone if it is not actualized. “Potencies are known through acts.”⁷³ As Norris Clarke says, “Potency in itself can never be directly observed or measured by any human observer.... Potentialities are known only through their corresponding acts, by hindsight, so to speak” (Clarke 2001, 119).⁷⁴

The doctrine of act and potency has been called the “cornerstone” of Thomism (Elders 1993, 158-159). “St. Thomas accepted one of the most original of Aristotle’s contributions to philosophy, elaborated it further and gave it a wider application” (159). The doctrine of act and potency was Aristotle’s original answer to the problem of change. The Greek philosophers Parmenides and Heraclitus held opposing views about change. Parmenides argued that being was one and unchangeable, while Heraclitus maintained that being was in a constant state of change and flux. Plato attempted to solve the issue by appealing to an eternal, unchanging world of forms and allowing change to occur in this world as it imperfectly “participates” in that world of forms. Aristotle’s doctrine of act and potency presented an ingenious solution that did not need a world of forms but still preserved identity through change. Every being is composed of potency and act.⁷⁵ The seed and the tree that grows out of it are one and the same thing (the same “substance”) but in varying degrees of potency and act through its growth and development. The man who is just beginning to learn how to play the piano is the same man years later who can skillfully play Mozart. The difference is that his potency to learn how to play the piano well has been actualized through years of practice. The block of marble and the statue of David (after the sculptor has performed his work) are still the same “marble” but actualized as a particular form.

Potency is an “analogous” term that need not apply in the same way every single time. There are clearly differences between the potency of a seed becoming a tree (potency as natural growth), the potency of learning how to play the piano (potency as the acquisition of a skill), and the potency of a block of marble to become a statue of David (the passive potency to be transformed into something). Nevertheless, a

⁷³ “*Potentiae cognoscuntur per actus*” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 7, *sed contra*; Fathers trans. 1947, 388). “Everything is knowable so far as it is in act, and not, so far as it is in potentiality (Metaph. ix, Did. viii, 9): for a thing is a being, and is true, and therefore knowable, according as it is actual. This is quite clear as regards sensible things, for the eye does not see what is potentially, but what is actually colored. In like manner it is clear that the intellect, so far as it knows material things, does not know save what is in act (*Unumquodque cognoscibile est secundum quod est in actu, et non secundum quod est in potentia, ut dicitur in IX Metaphys., sic enim aliquid est ens et verum, quod sub cognitione cadit, prout actu est. Et hoc quidem manifeste apparet in rebus sensibilibus, non enim visus percipit coloratum in potentia, sed solum coloratum in actu. Et similiter intellectus manifestum est quod, in quantum est cognoscitivus rerum materialium, non cognoscit nisi quod est actu*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 87, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 444).

⁷⁴ Wojtyla says regarding the act-potency pair: “The dialectic – as we would say nowadays – conjugation of the pair makes them so essentially referring to each other that when pointing to one we at the same time indicate the other; for to grasp the correlated meaning of either, the understanding of the other is indispensable. It is for this reason that act cannot be understood apart from potency and vice versa” (Wojtyla 1979, 63).

⁷⁵ Except God who according to Aquinas is pure act; meanwhile “prime matter,” which is pure potentiality, does not actually exist, but needs a substantial form to exist and be known (cf. Elders 1993, 159).

similarity runs through all these examples in that there is something “potential” or “possible” that is “actualized” or “realized.”

Potentiality is an analogous term: it denotes very different types of ability and possibility in the substantial and accidental order. We acquire this concept at the very start of our intellectual life when we experience that we *can* do something and that there is a capacity for change in ourselves and in things. As our command of language develops we express it by means of such words as “can”, “may”, “possible”, “faculty”, by the potential mood of the verbs, etc. (Elders 1993, 161)

The will too, according to Aquinas, is a *potentia* of the soul.⁷⁶ It is a “power” (*potentia* in this context is often translated as “power,” “faculty” or “capacity”) that operates in act. The act of willing manifests this power. The will, according to Aquinas, is also the same power as free choice (*liberum arbitrium*), the power to choose (cf. Gallagher 2002, 73).⁷⁷ When we choose we bring this potency into act. The potency is always there, but it needs to manifest itself through willing and choosing and the concrete actions that result. Similarly we can also consider *loób* as a *potentia* or power rather than think of it in terms of spatial or subjective interiority. The *loób* is “hidden” or “inside” only insofar as it needs to be actualized and revealed through choices and actions. It is not an epistemological interiority or subjectivity but rather a power for making choices.

For Aquinas the power (*potentia*) of the soul is different from the soul itself. The power is an accident. It is distinct from the essence of the soul. “Since the power of the soul is not its essence, it must be an accident; and it is in the second species of quality.”⁷⁸ Aquinas says it belongs to the “second specie of quality.” There are four species of quality according to Aquinas: 1) habits (e.g. virtue and vice), 2) natural capacities or incapacities (e.g. the intellect, will, sensory and motive powers), 3) affective qualities (e.g. sweetness, heaviness, hotness), and 4) figure and form.⁷⁹ Unlike habits which can be gained or lost through practice—or perhaps be infused by God supernaturally—the powers of the soul are “natural properties.” They flow out from the soul just as heat is naturally given out by fire.⁸⁰ Just as one cannot imagine fire that does not naturally possess heat, so one cannot imagine a human soul that does not naturally possess the powers of intellect and will.⁸¹ “The power of the soul

⁷⁶ *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77.

⁷⁷ *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 83, a. 4.

⁷⁸ “*Cum potentia animae non sit eius essentia, oportet quod sit accidens, et est in secunda specie qualitatis*” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 5; translation mine).

⁷⁹ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 49, a. 2. See also the introduction by Jeffrey Hause in *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (Aquinas 2010, 260-261).

⁸⁰ *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 3.

⁸¹ These two powers are so connected to the soul that they remain in the soul even after separation from the body in death. “But some powers belong to the soul alone as their subject; as the intelligence and the will. These powers must remain in the soul, after the destruction of the body (*Quaedam potentiae comparantur ad animam solam sicut ad subiectum, ut intellectus et voluntas. Et huiusmodi potentiae necesse est quod maneant in anima, corpore destructo*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 8, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 389).

flows from the essence, not by a transmutation, but by a certain natural resultance, and is simultaneous with the soul.”⁸²

Of course a natural question is, if the power of the soul is an accident, how can it be the subject of another accident, i.e. a habit? An accident cannot be the subject of another accident. Only a substance can be the subject of an accident. The answer is that the power of the soul allows the soul itself to be the subject of the habit. The power of the soul can be seen as a kind of mediator between the soul and the habit. “The powers of the soul may be said to be a medium between substance and accident, as being natural properties of the soul.”⁸³ As Wippel explains:

Thomas comments that an accident, simply taken in itself (*per se*), cannot be the subject for another accident. But there is a certain order among accidents. Insofar as the substantial subject stands under one accident, it (the substantial subject) can also be understood as the subject for another accident. In this way we can say that one accident is the subject for another, for instance, that a surface is the subject for the accident color. It is in this way, Thomas concludes, that a power of the soul can be the subject of a habit, or to put it in other terms, that one accident can serve as the subject for another. The implication is clear that powers of the soul are accidents and that habits can inhere in those powers. (Wippel 2000, 293)

So when we say that the virtue of justice (a habit) is in the will (a power of the soul), ultimately we are saying that justice is in the soul itself, only mediated by the particular power of the will. It is the will, and only the will, that allows the soul to have the virtue of justice. “The soul’s powers are subjects of the virtues in this sense: a virtue is in the soul through a power’s mediation.”⁸⁴ And this justifies the formulation for saying that the subject of justice is the will, or that justice “inheres” in the will. “Thomas continues to hold that if one accident cannot serve as the

⁸² “*Potentia animae ab essentia fluit, non per transmutationem, sed per naturalem quandam resultationem, et est simul cum anima*” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 7, ad 1; Fathers trans. 1947, 389).

⁸³ “*Potentiae animae possunt dici mediae inter substantiam et accidens, quasi proprietates animae naturales*” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 77, a. 1, ad 5; Fathers trans. 1947, 384).

⁸⁴ “*Potentias esse virtutum subiecta; quia virtus animae inest, potentia mediante*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 3, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 14). Aquinas also says: “There are accidents that are in potentiality to others: Transparency is in potentiality to light, and a surface is in potentiality to color. Moreover, one accident can be another’s cause: Moisture causes flavor, for instance. Indeed, we say one accident is another’s subject in this manner—not because one accident can sustain another, but because a subject can receive one accident through another’s mediation. We say that a power of the soul is a subject of a habit in this manner too. For one thing, a habit is related to a power of the soul as an actuality to a potentiality; for the power is indeterminate in its own nature, and through a habit it is determined to this or that. Moreover, acquired habits are caused through the principles of the soul’s powers (*Nam unum accidens est in potentia ad alterum, sicut diaphanum ad lucem, et superficies ad colorem. Unum etiam accidens potest esse causa alterius, ut humor saporis; et per hunc modum dicitur unum accidens alterius accidentis esse subiectum. Non quod unum accidens possit alteri accidenti sustentamentum praebere; sed quia subiectum est receptivum unius accidentis altero mediante. Et per hunc modum dicitur potentia animae esse habitus subiectum. Nam habitus ad potentiam animae comparatur ut actus ad potentiam; cum potentia sit indeterminata quantum est de se, et per habitum determinetur ad hoc vel illud. Ex principiis etiam potentialium habitus acquisiti causantur*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 3, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 13-14).

ultimate substratum of another, the underlying substantial subject can receive one accident by means of another” (Wippel 2000, 294).

This discussion is consistent with Filipino language, which does not consider *loób* to be the “soul” itself.⁸⁵ There is a different word for “soul” in the Filipino language, *kaluluwa*, which is more often used in the context of a separation of soul and body after death.⁸⁶ On the other hand when we say that a person’s *loób* has such and such as virtue, we also mean that the person himself as a whole, has this virtue. It does not do to separate the *loób* from the person himself. Rather, the *loób* is constitutive of the person. The person himself is *magandang-loób* (beautiful willed) simultaneously as his *loób* is *maganda* (beautiful). The metaphysics of Aquinas so far does not contradict these intuitions in the Filipino concepts.

The power of the will is revealed only through its acts such as the act of willing (*velle*) or making a free choice (*eligere*).⁸⁷ And this is of course something that human beings do all the time. Knowing about such a power is based on the actual experience and exercise of it. *Loób* likewise is not known except through its acts of willing. However as I have said it is also a “relational will.” There is an added emphasis on human relationships, significantly more than found in the *voluntas* of Aquinas.⁸⁸ *Loób* involves wanting and choosing, but most often in relationship to others, to the *kapwa*. One could say that *loób* involves a “triangulation,” to borrow a term from René Girard.⁸⁹ It is about wanting and choosing *x* insofar as it involves a positive or negative relationship to the *kapwa*. All desires and decisions are oriented to the *kapwa* in some way. The *kapwa* is always there in the *loób*’s decision-making.

For Aquinas, the virtues of the power of the will, namely, charity and justice are virtues specifically directed towards others.⁹⁰ Charity (*caritas*) is primarily directed

⁸⁵ In an earlier article I erroneously proposed to equate the *loób* directly with the *anima* (soul), and not to the *voluntas* (will) as a *potentia animae* (power of the soul). (Reyes 2013) Fortunately this error can be corrected here.

⁸⁶ Although there are modes of describing the *kaluluwa* such as “*maitim ang kaluluwa*” or “*halang ang kaluluwa*,” which both indicate a very bad person and which parallel the expression “*masamang-loób*” (bad-*loób*), these expressions are rather infrequent.

⁸⁷ Aquinas identifies several acts of the will: choice (*electio*), intention (*intentio*), simple willing (*simplex voluntas*), consent (*consensus*), use (*usus*), enjoyment (*fruition*) (cf. Gallagher 2002, 78-83).

⁸⁸ However, the relational aspect of *voluntas* is also present in Aquinas, in the nature of the will to spread its own goodness. “For natural things have a natural inclination not only towards their own proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible. Hence we see that every agent, in so far as it is perfect and in act, produces its like. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed (*Res enim naturalis non solum habet naturalem inclinationem respectu proprii boni, ut acquirat ipsum cum non habet, vel ut quiescat in illo cum habet; sed etiam ut proprium bonum in alia diffundat, secundum quod possibile est. Unde videmus quod omne agens, in quantum est actu et perfectum, facit sibi simile. Unde et hoc pertinet ad rationem voluntatis, ut bonum quod quis habet, aliis communicet, secundum quod possibile est*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 19, a. 2, respondeo; Fathers trans. 1947, 104).

⁸⁹ René Girard first introduced his concepts of “mimetic desire” and “triangulation” (“*Le desir triangulaire*”) in his work, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque* (Girard 1961). The desire for certain objects is learned from others; it is only because other people want them that I begin to want them myself.

⁹⁰ *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 5.

towards God and secondarily towards the neighbor⁹¹ while justice (*justitia*) is primarily towards others.⁹² This is in contrast to the virtues in other powers of the soul which are more individual. “They perfect man in those matters only which befit him in relation to himself.”⁹³ There is a similarity between the virtues of the will (*voluntas*) in Aquinas and the virtues of the *loób* in that they are directed towards others. The only reason why Aquinas has “individual” virtues (e.g. prudence, temperance, and fortitude) is because he posits several powers of the soul other than will, namely, reason and the sensitive powers. For Filipino virtue ethics, however, there is only one power of the soul, the *loób*, and this power of the soul contains all the other powers as I will explain later (section 3.1.4). *Loób* is concerned with relationships, and relationships are the highest priority in Filipino virtue ethics.

Given the *kapwa* orientation of *loób* the most ordinary way to discover the habits and virtues of another person’s *loób* is simply to have a personal and familiar relationship with the person. How this person treats others in his or her ordinary actions (precluding attempts at deception) is revealing of what kind of *loób* this person has. The longer one is on the receiving end of his other-directed actions, the more one gets to know this person’s *loób*. What Wojtyla says is applicable here: “Action reveals the person... Action gives us the best insight into the inherent essence of the person and allows us to understand the person most fully” (Wojtyla 1979, 11). When it comes to *loób*, we are concerned mostly about those actions that have something to do with the *kapwa*. These actions reveal the *loób*.

The same thing applies for one’s personal *loób*, that is, *loób* from the first-person perspective. It cannot be determined through isolation or reflection but through community. Like Miranda says, “*loob* needs *kapwa* even to be *loob*: its continued responding to *kapwa* is the condition for its own existence and authenticity as *loob*” (Miranda 1992, 84). This is also why Rafael says that *loób* cannot emerge without some kind of exchange activity (Rafael 1993, 127). This exchange is not limited to material objects but through all forms of interpersonal action and communication. This does not mean of course that the *loób* is bare and exposed at all times to everyone. There are gradations in the revelation of the *loób* towards the *kapwa*. There are various factors such as trust, rapport, and even deception. But even how one chooses to reserve or hide one’s *loób* from others still says something public about a person’s *loób*. Even a reclusive person can plainly show that his *loób* is distant or aloof from others. Or if he shuns his *kapwa*

⁹¹ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 25, a. 2; II-II, q. 26, a. 2.

⁹² *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 58, a. 2.

⁹³ “It is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others: because it denotes a kind of equality, as its very name implies; indeed we are wont to say that things are adjusted when they are made equal, for equality is in reference of one thing to some other. On the other hand the other virtues perfect man in those matters only which befit him in relation to himself (*Iustitiae proprium est inter alias virtutes ut ordinet hominem in his quae sunt ad alterum. Importat enim aequalitatem quandam, ut ipsum nomen demonstrat, dicuntur enim vulgariter ea quae adaequantur iustari. Aequalitas autem ad alterum est. Aliae autem virtutes perficiunt hominem solum in his quae ei conveniunt secundum seipsum*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1431).

altogether, except to maybe use or exploit them, then he is clearly a *masamang-loób* (with bad *loób*). The point here is that *loób* always has a public character, with reference to the *kapwa*. More on this below (section 3.1.5).

What is interesting is that a lot of Filipino scholars talk about *loób* in such a way that is certainly indicative of the potency-act distinction, but since they did not have the metaphysical distinction they were forced to express it in different ways. But the principle is there. Consider what de Castro says:

It is part of the meaning of *loob*—of what lies within—that it must be ventilated. The *kalooban* lies inside but it must not be kept inside. In a way, it is “what-lies-within-that-lives-without.” It can only be manifested and perceived externally. (de Castro 2000, 52)

It is not “external” in the sense of physical of course, such as a color that can be perceived scientifically, but external in the sense of being relational towards the *kapwa*. The same goes for other like descriptions. Jocano talks about a *loób* that is “latent” and a “behavioral manifestation” that is made “manifest” (Jocano 1997, 96). De Mesa says that the *loób* is “manifested through external behavior” (de Mesa 1987, 58). Miranda comes closest to the mark and surprisingly manages to use the words “potency” and “act” when he says: “*galaw* (human movement or act) is that potency-in-action activated by *loob*. Moral *galaw* is impossible without *loob*” (Miranda 1992, 211).⁹⁴ Though Miranda as mentioned earlier is plagued by the subjective-objective distinction, it is not difficult to reconceptualize his “principle of externalization” as a Thomistic “actualization” in the passage below:

Loob manifests its nature, its activity and its quality through the principle of externalization... This externalization is executed via corporality, language, and materiality. One’s *loob* is expressed in the various activities made possible by one’s body, the use of communication, and one’s connectedness with material reality. (Miranda 2003, 100)

Miranda mentions the role of “corporality” and the “body” in the manifestation of the *loób*. This is particularly important in Filipino virtue ethics and will come into focus later when we talk about *pakikiramdam* (section 4.4), a virtue that involves reading the other person’s non-verbal gestures (in addition to his speech) in order to guess the other person’s inner state. But the important thing for now is that the potency-act distinction is consistent with the way that Filipino scholars have been describing *loób*. The metaphysics of Aquinas provides a schema that is consistent with the following three characteristics of *loób*: 1) that it is the will, 2) that it is non-epistemological and “pre-modern,” and 3) that it connotes the meaning of something “inside” that needs to be “externalized”—a process faithfully captured by the doctrine of potency and act. Given these points, I would say that borrowing the metaphysics

⁹⁴ In the same work he also says: “*Loob* comes to be through its activity; without such activity *loob* is not; it does not exist” (Miranda 1992, 127).

and psychology of Aquinas for the interpretation of *loób* is a much better strategy than applying modern ideas on the *loób*.

I do not think that any modern philosophy can provide the same consistency of interpretation for *loób* as the one just provided. The ethics of Kant is possibly the closest contender. We could 1) insist on equating *loób* with his conception of an autonomous will, 2) relate *kapwa* to the second formulation of the categorical imperative (the “formula of humanity,” which is to not treat another person as a means but only as an end), and 3) make an allusion to “the moral law within.”⁹⁵ There is nothing that forbids such a comparison, but it would be more contrived than what is provided by the philosophy of Aquinas. It also does not help that Kant has a stoic conception of duty and denies that happiness is the proper end of man, something very foreign to Filipino culture.

The usefulness of Aquinas does not stop here. As I said, interpreting the *loób* as a power of the soul is a preparation for defining Filipino ethical concepts as “habits” and “virtues” of the *loób*. According to Aquinas, “through a virtuous habit, the power that is its subject acquires a perfection for performing its act.”⁹⁶ Just as there are virtues that are supposed to perfect the power of the will (*voluntas*) in its natural function, so there are virtues that are supposed to perfect the *loób*. This, in essence, is what virtue ethics is about.

3.1.3 The Filipino virtues as “habits” of the *loób*

For Aquinas, virtue is a habit in a power of the soul which produces good works.⁹⁷ I have just interpreted the *loób* as a power of the soul using Aquinas’ metaphysics and psychology. Now I intend to show that Filipino ethical concepts can reasonably be considered “habits” of this *loób*. A habit according to Aristotle is a quality that is difficult to change (*Categories* ch. 8). The repetition of like actions produces like habits (*Nicomachean Ethics* II.1). Aquinas introduced a very important development of Aristotle’s notion of habit by connecting habit with the power of the will (Kent 2002, 117). Interestingly, he managed to develop his own conception of habit through a deliberate misquotation of the Aristotelian commentator Averroes (Kent 2013, 106-108; Kent 2002, 119).⁹⁸ The notion of the “will” was lacking in Aristotle and was only first given emphasis by Augustine (Perkams 2013, 72).⁹⁹ Aquinas in this sense

⁹⁵ See Kant’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Paton 1948).

⁹⁶ “*Per habitum virtutis potentia quae ei subiicitur, respectu sui actus complementum acquirit*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 5, respondeo; Hause trans. 2010, 25).

⁹⁷ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 55, a. 3.

⁹⁸ The quotation in question is: “habit is that quality by which a person acts when he wishes [or wills] (*habitus est quo quis agit cum voluerit*)” (*Sententia libri ethicorum* lib. 3, l. 6, n. 4; Litzinger trans. 1993, 148; cf. *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 49, a. 3, *sed contra*), which comes from Book 3 of the commentary of Averroes on Aristotle’s *De anima* (On the soul). Aquinas “uses the saying from Averroes to interpret the connection [of habit] with action in a decidedly un-Aristotelian way” (Kent 2013, 108).

⁹⁹ Since the notion of “will” is not present in Aristotle but present in Aquinas, and *loób* is defined as “will,” this implies that Aquinas is a much better choice to work with Filipino ethical concepts than Aristotle (if one ever considered using Aristotle’s ethics directly for Filipino ethical concepts).

synthesizes the Aristotelian and Augustinian traditions in connecting habit with the will. This also means that Aquinas' notion of habit is one that is deliberate and voluntary. It does not count trivial and mechanical movements such as the habit of scratching one's chin or the habit of blinking too much. It is different from the more ordinary understanding of habit as any routine action. Both the acquisition of a habit and the performance of actions specific to a habit require choice. Over time a habit can become "second nature" for an individual, and insofar as it is a positive habit which produces good works, then it is also a "virtue."

Since there is no prior Filipino scholarship which describes Filipino concepts explicitly as "habits," my evidence for their being "habits" comes from a combination of three points:

1. The grammatical formulation of many virtues which describe the *loób* in the form x-*loób*, such as *kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób*, and *lakas-ng-loób*. These Filipino ethical concepts obviously describe the *loób* in some way. They are "qualities" of the *loób*.
2. The nature of the social training necessary to acquire Filipino ethical concepts, mostly within the family, and the nature of the general social expectation which expects a certain pattern of behavior throughout one's life. These ethical concepts are learned over a period of many years after which they are expected to be part of the normal behavior in society.
3. The nature of human relationship which requires consistent recurring acts to preserve and strengthen the relationship over a long period of time. As I have said, the goal of Filipino virtue ethics is the preservation and strengthening of the relationship between the *loób* and *kapwa* towards a unity (*pagkakaisa*). One act does not make a healthy relationship, but many acts.

With these three points I wish to show that what we have in Filipino ethical concepts is indeed a "virtue ethics." We are not *forcing* these concepts to be a "virtue ethics." They exhibit all the inherent characteristics of habits, and insofar as they are good habits, they are also virtues.

For the first point, it is noticeable that several Filipino ethical concepts are of the form x-*loób*. Of course, this does not help much if one is not even clear about what *loób* is because one is not completely sure about what it is that "x" describes. The notion of *loób* as an "inner self," with its modern undertones of "subjectivity" or "interiority," is not helpful because of its vagueness and relative inaccessibility. How can one really access the other person's "inner self," "subjectivity" or "interiority?" It is prone to lead to the epistemological problem of other minds. On the other hand, if *loób* is taken as "will" and "power of the soul" through Aquinas' metaphysics and psychology (section 3.1.2), then it becomes clear what it is that "x" describes and what "x" itself is. "X" describes a power of the soul (*loób*) and "x" is a "quality" of this *loób*.

The grammatical form of some Filipino ethical concepts gives us reason to think of them as “qualities” of the *loób* but not yet as “habits” of the *loób*. We need other evidence to show that they are habitual and long-term. Also there are some Filipino ethical concepts which do not have the form x-*loób* (such as *pakikiramdam* and *hiya*) but which I would also like to identify as virtues of the *loób*. Obviously, paying attention to the grammatical form of some ethical concepts is not sufficient to prove that they constitute a virtue ethics. Nevertheless, it is a good “first step” since it implies that some Filipino ethical concepts have the *loób* as their subject. And insofar as we have established the notion of *loób* as a power of the soul, then these Filipino ethical concepts can be said to inhere in the *loób* as their subject.

The second point is the nature of the social training necessary to acquire Filipino ethical concepts, mostly within the family, and the nature of the general social expectation which expects a certain pattern of behavior throughout one’s life. Many Filipino ethical concepts are learned inside the context of the traditional Filipino family. As I will discuss later, the main source and inspiration of *kagandahang-loób* is the mother’s love and concern for her child (section 4.2.2). The pattern of *utang-na-loób* is the debt of children towards their parents who have given them life and sacrificed so much for them (section 4.3.1). The other ethical concepts such as *pakikiramdam* and *hiya* are also learned and honed inside the family as they are applied to parents, siblings, and relatives. “It is in the family that [the Filipino] acquires his first orientation to group activities, **learns and internalizes the values of Filipino culture**, and finds guidance throughout life” (Jocano 1998b, 65; emphasis mine). In short, these Filipino concepts are learned and practiced through many years. They produce actions that fit a certain mold or pattern provided by the configuration of the traditional family. It is because of the nature of this social training that I consider these ethical concepts “habits.” They are “habits” that are meant to be possessed by the individual resulting in predictably good actions – a noble “second nature.”

The habits learned inside the family becomes what is expected and reinforced outside the family by society at large. “The family pattern becomes, in many ways, the prototype of interpersonal patterns... The Filipino has more trouble with those relationships which he cannot handle within family patterns” (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966, 194). The designation of many Filipino ethical concepts as “values,” though it is not sufficient to define them properly, at least shows that they are generally considered important and valuable by Filipino society. One can do a survey to check how much they are valued by the majority (cf. Clemente et al. 2008). There is considerable social expectation to possess these habits. There are also invectives that condemn the *absence* of these habits. “*Walang utang-na-loób!*” (no *utang-na-loób*) and “*walang hiya!*” (no *hiya*) are some of the most common. The reprobation is possible only if the possession of these habits are deemed particularly crucial for society.

It is expected that these habits will be “second nature” for the Filipino individual. Society should not have to keep correcting individuals; they must have these habits by default. De Castro describes *utang-na-loób* as being “self-imposed” (de Castro 1998) and Miranda calls it “self-binding” (Miranda 1987, 37). This is the idea of the individual being personally committed to the habit, not being forced by society. The perseverance in the habit comes from the one’s own will, and one may insist on a course of action until the “self-imposed” requirement is fulfilled. Consider how Francis Senden, a Belgian priest, describes his experience of *utang-na-loób* from Filipinos:

Now this is a thing, as it is practiced here, that is unknown to us in Europe, and even in the United States. If I do something for one of you, you will do something back; and as long as you haven’t done something back, you feel an *utang*, you feel indebted – you want to pay off your debt. That is your *utang na loob*. And this is so strong that people keep on coming back to pay off their *utang*. There is one person who has come back already for the third time to pay off his *utang* to me. Because he feels indebted, he keeps coming back to bring me something. (Senden 1974, 48)

The point is that the training and acquisition of these habits, mostly within the family, and the expectation to possess and practice them in society is for the long-term and entail particular patterns of behavior and action. This fits perfectly with the notion of habit as a quality that is difficult to change and is meant to be “second nature.” As Aquinas says, habits are necessary “for steadfastness in our operation. After all, what depends on the operation alone changes easily if it has not been stabilized by a habitual inclination.”¹⁰⁰

The third point is that if it is true that Filipino ethics concepts are all about the preservation and strengthening of human relationships, in particular the relationship between *loób* and *kapwa* towards *pagkakaisa*, then it would be natural for these concepts to produce recurring positive actions over the course of a long period of time since human relationships can also last for a long period of time. One act of kindness alone cannot make a healthy relationship. What is necessary is a series of kind and positive acts, ideally consistent and complimentary with each other.

This is brought out especially in the paradigm case of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*, which involves an ever-increasing cycle of beneficial acts. The circular dynamic of these two virtues will be discussed later (section 4.3). It is like the passing to and fro of a ball where the ball (an act of kindness or generosity) gets bigger every time. The continuation of this process is what strengthens the relationship between the *loób* and *kapwa* towards a *pagkakaisa*. It is already assumed however that there is a goal that is to be reached, and to reach it requires many steps and many actions. What determines the consistency and stability of those actions is, according to Aquinas, the presence of a “habit.”

¹⁰⁰ “...ut sit uniformitas in sua operatione; ea enim quae ex sola operatione dependent, facile immutantur, nisi secundum aliquam inclinationem habitualement fuerint stabilita” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 1, respondeo; Hause trans. 2010, 4).

Given these three points, I would consider it very reasonable to conceive of many Filipino ethical concepts as “habits” of the *loób* and as comprising a “virtue ethics.” They have the inherent characteristics of a virtue ethics. This is certainly much better than calling them “values.” Though “value” does indicate the importance of these concepts for Filipino society, it does not really say anything about the long-term and persistent nature of these concepts, and how they are expected to be possessed and practiced by individuals. The detailed discussion of the Filipino virtues in Chapter 4 will reinforce what has already been said in this section.

3.1.4 The “holism” of *loób*

One major difference between Aquinas’ powers of the soul (intellect, will, sensitive appetite) and the *loób* is that obviously there are several powers of the soul for Aquinas and there is only one for Filipino virtue ethics. From this perspective the *loób* might seem too “simple” compared to the sophisticated analysis of Aquinas. Furthermore, the most important faculty for Aristotle and Aquinas, reason itself, does not seem to figure prominently in Filipino virtue ethics. One can explain this by saying that the Southeast Asian tradition from which *loób* is derived has not yet isolated the Greek *logos* or the Latin *ratio* as a separate faculty in man. I suggest that *loób* is a “holistic will” in that it still contains the other powers in a primitive, undivided way. One can perhaps profit from a comparison between *loób* and the *thumos* of the Homeric tradition. “Someone’s *thumos* is what carries him forward: it is his self as a kind of energy” (MacIntyre 1988, 16). It just so happens that in the Homeric tradition man was not yet defined as a *zoon logikon* (rational animal), that is, before the advent of Greek philosophy. It is reasonable to state then that the Southeast Asian tradition, which represents a “pre-Homeric” society insofar as it was still a pure oral culture, had not yet produced any counterpart to the Greek philosophers nor isolated reason as a separate faculty in man. This is the underlying explanation why Filipino scholars, while investigating the culture, can say things like: “psychologically, we are a highly sensitive people... We reason more with our hearts than with our minds” (Jocano 1997, 9). Consider what Manuel Dy also says:

A Filipino hardly acts on the basis of his rationality. Not that he is irrational or does not use his head, but he tends to act more from the promptings of his heart, from an intuitive and immediate grasp of reality. More accurately, he acts from his *kalooban*, which is in reality, inseparably heart-mind. (Dy 1994a, 20)

The term that he uses, “heart-mind” already points to the “holism” of *loób*, where mind or the intellect is not separate from the will and emotions. Of course the Spanish Catholic tradition, which I said was influential in the expansion of Filipino concepts, was definitely aware of “reason” through its scholasticism. The Spanish Catholic tradition in the Philippines had Thomism in its pure scholastic form. However this rational aspect—what we could call the Greek strain—was not transferred to the Filipino concepts themselves. It was only the “moral” aspect—the Judeo-Christian strain—that helped widen and expand the Filipino concepts like *loób* and *kapwa* and the other virtues. This can be proven by investigating the Christian

sermons and literature that were translated into Tagalog (or the devotional texts written by the natives themselves), which indicates what actually reached the common folk and transformed the culture.

Filipino scholars such as Miranda were aware of this lack of “rationality” in *loób*, and Miranda has tried to insert reason by analyzing *loób* into its constituent parts and then positing Filipino concepts that could account for rationality. He divided the *loób* into the following three parts:¹⁰¹

1. Cognitive/Intellectual element
2. Volitive/Will element
3. Emotional/Pathic element

This division is very interesting because it is practically the same as how Aquinas divides the powers of the soul. “We must be aware that in human beings there are three possible subjects of virtue: intellect, will and the lower appetite, which is divided into the concupiscible and irascible.”¹⁰² Though it is certain that Miranda was well trained in Thomism as a priest, he hardly credits Aquinas in coming up with this division. Perhaps it is a deliberate choice on his part to apply Thomistic insights to Filipino concepts without explicitly mentioning Aquinas. In one of the few passages where he mentions Thomas he does say:

Resonance with one’s hearers does not imply choosing a radical ethnocentric stance. On the one hand the criterion does mean that the new vocabulary should be intelligible to the natives “*etsi Thoma non daretur*,” even without explicit acquaintance with Thomistic thought. On the other hand, it means having in some way imbibed the spirit of Thomas who so struggled with essential human and religious questions that others could not but acknowledge an affinity with his basic insights. (Miranda 1989, 10)

It is possible that this attempt at dividing up the *loób* was done in the “spirit of Thomas.”¹⁰³ This is probably commendable as an attempt at synthesis and development between traditions, but if it is granted it must be pointed out that it is a completely *new* development. This is the first time in history that *loób* is divided up in this way to explicitly contain a “rational,” or in Miranda’s words, a “cognitive/intellectual” element. Prior to this *loób* has never been directly associated with reason.

¹⁰¹ This division is a synthesis of what is found in several of Miranda’s works: *Loob: The Filipino Within* (1989, 29), *Buting Pinoy: Probe Essays on Value as Filipino* (1992, 256-258), and *Kaloob ni Kristo: A Filipino Christian Account of Conscience* (2003, 68-74).

¹⁰² “*Sciendum est, quod in homine triplex potest esse subiectum virtutis... scilicet intellectus, voluntas et appetitus inferior, qui in concupiscibilem et irascibilem dividitur*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 8, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 41).

¹⁰³ In another place he says regarding this division: “we can affirm that this view poses no contradiction to the biblical view; that it fits in remarkably with the Scholastic synthesis; that it lends itself even to the psychoanalytic interpretation” (Miranda 2003, 74).

There is a huge difference between Aquinas' conception of "will" which explicitly interacts with the reason and the *loób* which is not directly linked to reason (though Miranda has recently attempted to do so as shown above). For Aquinas, "the intellect in itself and absolutely is higher and nobler than the will."¹⁰⁴ Aquinas is pretty clear that the will is a "rational appetite,"¹⁰⁵ and thus, constantly interacts with the intellect. "The will and the intellect mutually include one another: for the intellect understands the will, and the will wills the intellect to understand."¹⁰⁶ O'Reilly says that in Aquinas, "the relationship between intellect and will can be further elucidated by the notion of *circulatio* according to which intellect and will circle around each other and overflow into each other" (O'Reilly 2013, 105-106). These are statements that cannot be made explicitly about *loób*. It is in this sense that even though *loób* and *voluntas* refer to "will," the conceptions of this "will" are very different.

Even as Miranda tries to innovate by analyzing the *loób* into its various elements, he still recognizes *loób* as a holistic unity. Miranda does not say that reason is a separate faculty from *loób*. It is still contained within the *loób*. *Loób* "encloses an inner world... built up of the operations of *malay* at *isip* [consciousness and thought], *dama* at *bait* [feeling and common sense], *ugali* at *kalooban* [personality and will]" (Miranda 2003, 68). It is in this sense that we can call *loób* a "holistic will." In Aquinas the will (*voluntas*) is a distinct power from reason and the sensitive powers, whereas in Filipino virtue ethics, the *loób* still *contains* all those powers in their weak or incipient form. To borrow a term from Aquinas, the *loób* contains these other powers "virtually."¹⁰⁷ It possesses the functionality of the other powers without making them ontologically distinct from itself. As Miranda says:

Loob manifests the unitary totality of the person. Psychic elements are not only "mine" but also "unified;" they are not left scattered but centralized. *Loob* shows the unity of thought and will, vital condition and affective life.¹⁰⁸ (Miranda 2003, 69)

¹⁰⁴ "*Secundum se et simpliciter intellectus sit altior et nobilior voluntate*" (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 82, a. 3, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 415).

¹⁰⁵ "*Voluntas est appetitus quidam rationalis*" (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 8, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 626).

¹⁰⁶ "*Voluntas et intellectus mutuo se includunt, nam intellectus intelligit voluntatem, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere*" (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 16, a. 4, ad 1; Fathers trans. 1947, 92).

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas uses this term when he claims that the intellective soul "virtually" contains the sensitive and vegetative souls. "There is no other substantial form in man besides the intellectual soul; and that the soul, as it virtually contains the sensitive and nutritive souls, so does it virtually contain all inferior forms, and itself alone does whatever the imperfect forms do in other things. The same is to be said of the sensitive soul in brute animals, and of the nutritive soul in plants, and universally of all more perfect forms with regard to the imperfect (*Nulla alia forma substantialis est in homine, nisi sola anima intellectiva; et quod ipsa, sicut virtute continet animam sensitivam et nutritivam, ita virtute continet omnes inferiores formas, et facit ipsa sola quidquid imperfectiores formae in aliis faciunt. Et similiter est dicendum de anima sensitiva in brutis, et de nutritiva in plantis, et universaliter de omnibus formis perfectioribus respectu imperfectiorum*)" (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 76, a. 4, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 377).

¹⁰⁸ Though not as articulate, de Mesa also points to the "holistic" character of *loób* and the tripartite division: "*Loob*, the inner self, is the core of one's personhood and where the true worth of a person lies. It is what makes the lowland Filipino what he is and who he is as a person. The *loob*, I would say, is the ultimate,

As Miranda says in the passage above, *loób* is a “unity of thought and will... and affective life.” However, even within this unity it is the will which takes pride of place. The other aspects of the *loób* only play a supporting role to the will. This privilege of the will will be more evident when we look at the dynamics of the Filipino virtues which have little if anything to do with reason.

From this vantage point it is explicable if there is no truly indigenous Filipino “metaphysics.” The metaphysics of Plato and Aristotle required a separate faculty of reason to access and comprehend forms, whether in the eternal world of forms or as hylemorphic with matter. And the same is true when we talk about the modern understanding of reason as calculative and mathematical. One will notice a very conspicuous lack of metaphysical, logical, and technical terms in the Filipino language.

However, despite this weakness there is a sophisticated strength when it comes to human relationships. The Filipino language has an overwhelming number of words and terms that cover many shades of relating with others, most of them difficult to translate into English (*pagmamalasakit*, *pakikiramay*, *pakikisalamuha*, etc.). This makes sense because the will, according to Aquinas, is that power which concerns *kapwa*. If *loób* is a “holistic will” then that means it contains all the other human faculties for the main purpose of establishing and preserving relationships with *kapwa*.

3.1.5 The “relationality” of *loób* towards the *kapwa*

There is a compound word of *loób*, *kaloób*, which can serve as a kind of bridge to its partner concept of *kapwa*. *Kaloób* simply means “gift.” “*Loob* is at the root of one of the words for “to give,” *ipagcaloob*, and a gift itself is *caloob*, literally part of the inside of something” (Rafael 1993, 125). One of course needs someone to give the gift *to*. A gift in this context is not merely a matter of physical goods, it binds the giver and the recipient in a particular way. It is similar to how Marcel Mauss describes the gift in primitive societies: “the objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them” (Mauss 1966, 31). This is justified by the linguistic form of *kaloób* which could also be translated literally as “co-will.” Rafael says that *loób* needs exchange with others in order to be *loób*. “Without exchange, no sense of... *loob* would emerge” (Rafael 1993, 127). The *loób*, insofar as it is *loób*, has a natural propensity to give to others, to give a *kaloób* (gift) in order to reveal oneself as a *kaloób* (co-will). This is one of the basic outward “invitations” towards the *kapwa*. It is the invitation towards relationship and unity. As we will see later, the primary virtue responsible for the *kaloób* is called *kagandahang-loób*. *Kagandahang-loób* is the virtue which makes a *loób* more disposed to give gifts (*kaloób*) to others, not merely as the giving of objects but as the expansion of the *loób* itself.

organizing center of human reality. And more than that, it is the very zone of creaturehood which is the **substratum of ideas, feelings and behaviors**” (de Mesa, 1987, 57; emphasis mine).

Though I mentioned Miranda's shortcomings in his adoption of the subjective-objective dichotomy, he redeems himself by emphasizing what only a few scholars have noticed, the inseparable connection between *loób* and *kapwa*. As he says, "*loob* needs *kapwa* even to be *loob*: its continued responding to *kapwa* is the condition for its own existence and authenticity as *loob*" (Miranda 1992, 84). In another place he also says: "It should be fairly obvious, in the light of philosophical interest, that *kapwa* is a reality that is made possible only because of a relationship between one *loob* and another *loob*" (Miranda 1989, 64).

In the personal sphere the opposite pole of the *loób* is the *kapwa*. To posit a corresponding *labas* (outside), as some scholars have done (section 3.1.1) in this sphere is superfluous. All the virtues already have their "object" in the *kapwa*, as I will describe in Chapter 4. It is interesting that although many of the virtue words such as *kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób* and *lakas-ng-loób* contain the word *loób* there are no compound ethical words that contain the word *labas*.¹⁰⁹ To use a phrase from Wittgenstein, there are two different "language-games" operating here.¹¹⁰ Just as the same piece might be used in two different games with different roles (the same piece in chess might also be used as a piece in checkers), so also there is the same word *loób* when it comes to the physical objects and *loób* when it comes to persons. Since they are the same word one can easily confuse the two, but the opposite of the first is *labas* while the opposite of the second is *kapwa*. Another scholar who has championed this insight is Jose de Mesa. He acknowledges the inherently relational nature of *loób* when he says, "*loob* is a relational concept" (de Mesa 1987, 45), or more elaborately, "*loob* apart from referring to the core of personhood, also states what kind of core that is in relationship. *Loob*, one may say, is a relational understanding of the person in the lowland Filipino context" (de Mesa 1987, 46). Albert Alejo likewise criticizes a *loób-labas* distinction used by Zeus Salazar:

If one studies *loób* it cannot be encased only in a simplistic division between *loób* and *labas*. *Kagandahang-loób*, for example, is not only beauty inside but goodness in relating with others; in short, it is itself outward.¹¹¹ (Alejo 1990, 22; translation mine)

¹⁰⁹ One may consult the comprehensive appendix of Albert Alejo's *Tao Po! Tuloy!* entitled *Kayamanan ng Loob* (Riches of *Loób*) (Alejo 1990, 135-151).

¹¹⁰ Wittgenstein is famous for comparing different language activities with games in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1958). In proposition 23: "Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others: Giving orders, and obeying them—Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements—Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—Reporting an event—Speculating about an event." It is possible to use the same word in different language-games with correspondingly different uses and meanings.

¹¹¹ "*Kung pag-aaralan ang 'loob' ay hindi maaaring ikahon lamang sa simplistikong paghihiwa ng 'loob' at 'labas.'* Ang *kagandahang-loob*, *halimbawa*, *ay hindi lamang ganda sa loob kundi kabutihan sa pakikipagkapwa; samakatwid, ito ay palabas rin*" (Alejo 1990, 22). Alejo critiques Salazar for introducing *labas* in his discussion. Salazar says, "*ang lahat ng may kaugnayan sa labas ay may kaugnayan sa dimensiyong sosyal* [everything that has a connection to the outside (*labas*) has a connection to the social dimension]" (Salazar 1985, 292). Moreover Salazar introduces an explicit subject-object dichotomy in his analysis of *hiya* (293).

One could say the same thing about the other virtues. Like I said they already have a “object” in the *kapwa*, and positing a *labas* when it comes to personal relationship is superfluous. In another place Alejo also says: “The *loob* is like a home; here the *kapwa* resides also”¹¹² (Alejo 1990, 111; translation mine). There is an ever recurring emphasis on the inherent link between *loób* and *kapwa*.

A *loób* that is separated from the *kapwa* turns into a useless and hollow concept. In a culture still permeated by the spirit of tribalism and family it does not even make sense. From the moment a child is born he is always related to people other than himself, first with his mother, then with his immediate family, and then with a wide circle of relatives. There is no single moment in his life where he is existentially “alone” or “independent.” The turn towards isolation or independence, should he choose it, comes much later, and it involves breaking apart from the default order of relationships. The saying “no man is an island” is a given. That a man is born an “individual,” if by individual we mean someone who can live independently of others, is a fiction. *Loób* in this context is always related to others, a veritable “relational will.”

Vicente Rafael, who ignored the concept of *kapwa* in his post-structuralist critique of Philippine history, at least noticed the relational aspect of *loób* when he investigated *utang-na-loób*.

Loob is important not because it invariably designated a “soul” (as the Spaniards wanted it to) at the core of being. The significance of *loob* lies in the fact that it marks out the space within which objects and signs from the outside can be accumulated and from which and toward which they can be issued in payment of a debt. In *utang na loob* transactions, the *loob* that one places in circulation is detachable and reattachable; **it does not, as the Spaniards wished it to do, sum up the self in its totality.** Where Tagalog notions of indebtedness are concerned, ***loob* does not exist apart from the mechanism of debt transactions; it can be known and realized only in the process of indebtedness.** (Rafael 1993, 125-126; emphasis mine)

A debt always requires someone else to have a debt to. *Utang-na-loób* is always towards a *kapwa*. Despite Rafael glossing over the concept of *kapwa*, his conclusion is correct that *loób* “does not exist apart,” but requires a process of exchange and reciprocity with others. “Without exchange, no sense of... *loob* would emerge” (Rafael 1993, 127). All of this is to show that the partner concept of *loób* is the *kapwa*. *Loób* is a relational will. Even more circumstantial evidence will be presented in the chapter on the Filipino virtues which consistently describe the *loób* as it relates with the *kapwa*. None of them will require any talk of a *labas*. One should forget any talk of *labas* when it comes to *loób* in the personal sphere, especially if it is grounded in a foreign and anachronistic dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity.

¹¹² “*Ang loob ay isang tahanan; dito ang kapwa ay kasambahay*” (Alejo 1990, 111).

This orientation towards *kapwa* constitutes another difference between the *loób* and the *voluntas* of Aquinas. Aquinas clearly says that the *voluntas* has the “good” (*bonum*) as its object, and also, that the intellect presents the idea of the “appetibile good” (*bonum appetibile*) to the will.¹¹³ The idea of the “appetibile good” is a universal which may point to many good things. However, for the *loób* the relationship with the *kapwa* is treated by default as a primary good. The *kapwa* itself can be said to be a “good.” I think that this is accounted for by primitive tribal mentality where it is more clearly obvious that the survival of one depends on others. One does not really have to “think” or “reason” about this inasmuch as it is instinctive for the sake of survival (cf. Thomasello 2013). This at least accounts for why the *loób* does not need to appeal to “reason.”

In the preceding sections, I have criticized the “modern Cartesian confusion” and misinterpretation of *loób* (3.1.1). As an alternative, I showed the suitability of borrowing from the metaphysics and psychology of Aquinas in order to interpret the *loób* as “will” and “power of the soul” (3.1.2). This move has the benefit of: 1) clearly defining *loób* as “will” and not some vague “inner self,” 2) providing a “pre-modern” interpretation for a “pre-modern” concept, and 3) accommodating the meaning of *loób* as “inside” but through a more nuanced metaphysical doctrine of potency and act in contrast to epistemological “subjectivity” or “interiority.” It also prepares the ground for defining Filipino ethical concepts as “habits” and “virtues” which has the *loób*, a power of the soul, as its subject.

Once this interpretation is allowed, other things fall into place for Filipino ethical concepts. To prove that these ethical concepts are “habits” of *loób*, I have pointed to: 1) their grammatical form as *x-loób* which describes the quality of the *loób*, 2) the nature of the training to acquire these habits, mostly within the family, and the nature of the social expectation outside the family that requires a consistent pattern of behavior, and 3) the long-term nature of human relationships which these Filipino virtues are expected to preserve and strengthen; a healthy relationship is not made by a single act alone (section 3.1.3). This evidence for the “habitual” nature of Filipino ethical concepts will be reinforced in Chapter 4 where I describe Filipino virtues in detail.

Lastly, I have explained why I consider the *loób* to be a “holistic and relational will.” It is “holistic” in that it contains the other powers of the soul (section 3.1.4), and it is “relational” in that its primary object is the *kapwa* (section 3.1.5). With these foundations in place we can now proceed to the “object” of the *loób* which is the *kapwa*.

¹¹³ “The appetibile good, the idea of which is in the intellect, is the object of the will (*Bonum autem appetibile, cuius ratio est in intellectu, est obiectum voluntatis*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 82, a. 3, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 415).

3.2 *Kapwa*

Though most of the Filipino authors who investigated *loób* also touched on *kapwa* in one way or another, the conceptual prominence of *kapwa* can clearly be traced to Virgilio Enriquez, founder of the Filipino Psychology (*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*) movement, who identified *kapwa* as the “core value” of Filipino culture (1978).

In the Philippine value system, *kapwa* is at the very foundation of human values. This core value then determines not only the person’s personality but more so his personhood or *pagkatao*. (Enriquez 1992, 76)

This was a reaction to Lynch’s proposal of “smooth interpersonal relations” (SIR) as the highest value of Filipino culture (1961) (cf. section 1.4.1).

The controversy was: was SIR not merely superficial, a matter of only preserving harmonious appearance? Did it not tend towards hypocrisy? The identification of *kapwa* as “core value” was a move to relocate the highest value in a more substantial, indigenous concept.

After the death of Enriquez in 1994 the most recent treatments of *kapwa* include the work of his student de Guia on *kapwa* and Filipino artists (2005), Aguilung-Dalisay’s connection of *kapwa* to voluntarism (2004), Clemente et al.’s empirical survey on *kapwa* and other Filipino values (2008), and Ibana’s linguistic examination of the prefix *ka-*, specifically within the context of the Philippine revolution (2009). Though all these recent studies approach the topic from different disciplines, there has notably been no extended philosophical treatment of *kapwa*. Guevara for example briefly compares *kapwa* with the thought of Levinas and Buber, but only to quickly conclude that they are dissimilar (2005). The discussion in this section is the first extended philosophical treatment on *kapwa*. This discussion possesses the advantages of the Thomistic metaphysical and psychological foundations introduced in the previous section on *loób* (3.1). I will first discuss *kapwa* itself in how it has been described by other Filipino scholars and how I myself interpret it as a second-person perspective of *loób* (section 3.2.1). Then, similar to how I adopted the metaphysics and psychology of Aquinas to provide a deeper understanding of *loób*, I will also use Thomistic metaphysics, innovated through a “creative retrieval” of Norris Clarke, to deepen our understanding of *kapwa* (section 3.2.2). Clarke draws out the “relational” aspect of Thomistic metaphysics in a way that is very compatible with *kapwa* and its animist background. Such a metaphysics is useful for preserving the integrity of the concept from modern presuppositions. Finally, I compare the compatibility of *kapwa* with other ethical theories that deal with the “other,” namely that of Levinas, feminist care ethics, and Kant (section 3.2.3).

3.2.1 What is *kapwa*?

In the early Tagalog-Spanish dictionaries, *kapwa*, formerly written as “*capoua*,” was defined as *igual* (equal), *ambos* (both), *entrambos* (both) (de San Buena Ventura 1613, 641), and “*ambos á dos igualmente* (both two equally)” (de Noceda & de Sanlucar 1860, 83). Based on these general definitions, one could technically speak of two non-human objects as *kapwa*, especially since there is a nuance given for another phrase “*capoua co tao*” which is defined “*igual amy ,o otro yo* (the same as me, or another me)” (de San Buena Ventura 1613, 362) and “*hombre como yo* (man like me)” (de Noceda & de Sanlucar 1860, 83). However, one should note that even the examples for *capoua* tend to refer to human beings as in “*capoua sila banal (son igualmente justos; they are equally righteous)*” (de San Buena Ventura 1613, 362) or “*sauain mo capoua silang dalaua (prohibeles á los dos igualmente; forbid them both equally)*” (de Noceda & de Sanlucar 1860, 83). It can be reasonably said that the usual referents of *capoua* are human beings.

I think there is an advantage to the simplicity of these older Spanish dictionaries, especially the 1613 dictionary, which defines *capoua* as “equal” and “both” and *capoua co tao* as “another me.” They do not have to wrestle with loaded words such as “self” or “identity” which are deeply influenced by modern ideas and which we will see used in the research on *kapwa* in the 20th century.

Enriquez, who spearheaded the interest on *kapwa*, mentions the difficulty of a direct English translation:

When asked for the closest English equivalent of *kapwa*, one word that comes to mind is the English word “others.” However, the Filipino word *kapwa* is very different from the English word “others.” In Filipino, *kapwa* is the unity of the “self” and “others.” The English “others” is actually used in opposition to the “self,” and implies the recognition of the self as a separate identity. In contrast, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others. (Enriquez 1992, 52)

He also emphasizes the opposition between *kapwa* and Western individuality:

The *ako* (ego) and the *iba-sa-akin* (others) are one and the same in *kapwa* psychology: *Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa* (I am no different from others). Once *ako* starts thinking of himself as separate from *kapwa*, the Filipino “self” gets to be individuated in the Western sense and, in effect, denies the status of *kapwa* to the other. By the same token, the status of *kapwa* is also denied to the self.¹¹⁴ (Enriquez 1992, 54)

¹¹⁴ This stark contrast between *kapwa* and Western individuality is shared by Miranda: “Filipino dictionaries render *kapwa* with “both” or “fellow-being,” underlining an understanding of shared identity that the word and concept “other” as used in the West practically excludes, inasmuch as it stresses separateness of identity. *Kapwa* is thus a concept that truly equalizes both myself as well as the other. It is a concept that truly equalizes both partners by focusing on the dignity and being of both. Unless that be given, the term *kapwa* applies neither to myself nor to the other” (Miranda 1989, 51).

F. Landa Jocano also says of *kapwa*: “the term *kapwa* means ‘of the same nature,’ ‘of equal status,’ ‘a partnership,’ and ‘a shared orientation’” (Jocano 1997, 61). Katrin de Guia, one of Enriquez’s students also writes:

The core of Filipino personhood is *kapwa*. This notion of a “shared Self” extends the I to include the Other. It bridges the deepest individual recess of a person with anyone outside him or herself, even total strangers. (de Guia 2005, 28)

Other scholars touch on *kapwa* through different angles. Mercado also talks about *kapwa* but he utilizes the word *sakop* (inclusive group¹¹⁵)—a word which he says is present in several Philippine languages—to account for the experience of *kapwa* across regions not just limited to Tagalog language and culture (Mercado 1976, 100). “In Philippine culture the value of *sakop* prevails over the individual, the main Filipino virtue¹¹⁶ is *pakikipagkapwa* which roughly is to be related to others. It comes from /pakiki-/, a more emotional intense [sic] form of /paki-/ which denotes a continuing act of reciprocal action with *kapwa*, ‘fellow being’” (Mercado 1979, 49). He defines this relationship through “non-dualism”: “Non-dualism between the individual and others urges the individual to be harmonious in his relations with his *sakop*” (Mercado 1976, 191). Jaime Bulatao also touches on *kapwa* indirectly when he suggests transpersonal (“beyond the person” or “beyond the individual”) counseling as more appropriate for the Philippine context since “it seeks fulfillment of the person not as apart from fellow persons but as a part of a living group, where the “I” has fused with the “we.”... The image of men is not as separate hardboiled eggs but as fried eggs all fried together in a pan, where one cannot tell exactly where one egg ends and the other egg begins” (Bulatao 1992, 91). Whether *kapwa* is more equivalent to scrambled eggs or sunny side ups, is not said.

One can notice the difficulties that scholars have with translating the word into English. Even though de Guia’s “shared self” or “self in the other” (the title of her book; 2005) comes close, the word cannot be sufficiently translated with a phrase that uses the word “self.” To use the word “self” already presupposes a division between self and others, as Enriquez properly noted. But for *kapwa* this division has not yet happened. It is a “pre-modern” concept, as I have indicated (cf. sections 2.1-2.2). The English word “self” has been sculpted by a long and complex history of revolutions and philosophies in the West, as Charles Taylor has painstakingly shown (Taylor 1989). It is now intrinsically linked to other concepts such as subjectivity, autonomy and independence. The terms “shared identity,” used by Enriquez and Miranda, perhaps comes closer. However the concept of “identity” is still bound with the modern search for “self-identity,” and is therefore also alien to the roots of *kapwa*.

¹¹⁵ Scott calls *sakop* “any inclusive group, but especially one supportive of a person on whom they were dependent, like children on their parents or slaves on their master” (Scott 1994, 136). He relates this with the cognate word *haop*, which is a datu’s following and the Visayan counterpart to the Tagalog word *barangay*.

¹¹⁶ Mercado uses this term very loosely, practically in the same sense as “value.”

In order to understand the concept of *kapwa*, one must first recognize how intimately *kapwa* is bound up with *loób*. As I have mentioned, the *loób* is not a sundered self or an autonomous will but a “holistic and relational will.” *Kapwa* is constantly in relation to the *loób*. *Kapwa* is the mirror reflection of *loób*. To understand *kapwa* one must understand *loób* especially since the English concept of “self” cannot be the partner of *kapwa*. This is one of the benefits of discussing the concept of *loób* before talking about *kapwa*. Unfortunately the main advocates of the Filipino psychology movement championed *kapwa* without yet having a solid understanding of *loób*, and this explains their struggles in articulating *kapwa* itself.

On a metaphysical level *kapwa* must be seen fundamentally as another *loób*. As Ferriols says, “*nakikipagkapwa ang kalooban at kalooban* [two *loob*’s treat each other as *kapwa*]” (1991, 161). Normally, the *loób* is the first-person perspective and *kapwa* is the second-person perspective of one and the same thing. Since *loób* has been defined as “holistic (undivided) will,” it represents the whole person to such an extent that one can consider the *loób* not just as the “will” but as the whole person. The *loób* initiates a gift (*kaloób*) and *kapwa* is the one who reciprocates. However, since the *kapwa* is also a *loób*, then the *kapwa* can also initiate a new gift (*kaloób*) to the previous initiator. This leads to the reciprocal dynamic of *kapwa* relationships, which will be elaborated later when discussing the dual virtues of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* (the “beating heart” of Filipino virtue ethics) (section 4.3). This metaphysical understanding of *kapwa* is quite different from the practical understanding of *kapwa* as treating a non-family member as though he or she is a member of one’s own family, clan or tribe. More on this shortly.

Is everyone a *kapwa*? The way that Filipino psychology talks about the “other” in a general way, focusing on their humanity, seems to suggest that everyone is *kapwa*. Also, this is consistent with the Christian infusion into *kapwa* of loving one’s neighbor regardless of their race or ethnicity. I would suggest that the main premise in Filipino virtue ethics is that everyone is already *kapwa* in a “dormant” or “potential” way (we can once again productively exploit the potency-act distinction here). We are all already “connected” (the connectivity of the Southeast Asian tradition) and we are all “fellow humans” (the principle of the “neighbor” from the Spanish tradition). The *loób* is already “potentially” related to everyone else. However, the *loób* must test the waters to “actualize” these relationships. There is the initial “reaching out” through a gift (*kaloób*) or some service. It may be possible that the other, who was potentially *kapwa*, might refuse this gesture and this invitation. The other has the option to refuse to be a *kapwa* (for example, he might be an individualist or a self-styled Nietzschean *Übermensch* or superman). Therefore the relationship that was potentially there is never actualized, rather it is cancelled. It takes two willing *loóbs* to constitute a genuine *kapwa* relationship.

It is only when the other responds in kind that the *kapwa* relationship is truly actualized. The “potential” relationship becomes an “actual” relationship; what was “dormant” becomes “dynamic.” The initial movement of *kagandahang-loób* is

answered by an *utang-na-loób* and this paves the way for the practice of the other Filipino virtues as well. Though the potential *kapwa* relationship can remain a noble idea or sentiment in the mind, the actual *kapwa* relationship requires the practice of the Filipino virtues. As Alejo describes it, the *loób* can potentially “widen” itself through relationships with *kapwa*.

I who am here am also there, in a hidden way, in others, and I need only to “open my eyes” or “be enlightened” to this reality for it to become true. At the same time, the boundaries of the world of *loob*—I do not know where it ends or if it can ever end. But I experience that there are times when it widens or narrows depending on my receptivity to the invitations of relationship others have for me.¹¹⁷ (Alejo 1990, 83-84; translation mine)

What Alejo is describing here is the “potential” aspect of *kapwa*. Something that is still “in a hidden way” and which is still at the level of “invitations of relationship.” Even the title of his work, *Tao Po! Tuloy Po!* (Roughly, “Someone here!”—“Come in!”) speaks of the invitation and the possibility of *kapwa* relationship. He does not mention what happens when this relationship is initiated. Nevertheless, the idea of the “widening” or “narrowing” of the *loób* is a good metaphor and useful for visualization. It sounds quite similar to what Clarke says of the person: “To be a person is to be intrinsically expansive, ordered toward self-manifestation and self-communication” (Clarke 1993, 71). The *loób* too is drawn to actualize itself to its fullest potential through *kapwa* relationships. The *loób* develops and discovers its fulfillment through *kapwa* relationships. As Alejo also says, “Every ‘me’ is from the *kapwa*, *kaloób* [gift] of the *kapwa*, influenced by the *kapwa*. Everywhere I look, there is the trace of my *kapwa*”¹¹⁸ (Alejo 1990, 87; translation mine).

From this vantage point it can be seen why “exclusive individualism” is so problematic for the twin concepts of *loób* and *kapwa* (cf. section 2.3.2). Exclusive individualism is the “narrowing” of *loób*. It is the deliberate ignorance, or sometimes even denial, of the other as *kapwa*. “The dark side of individualism is a focus on the self, which both flattens and narrows lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society” (Taylor 1991, 4). Though one might want to, one cannot actualize a *kapwa* relationship with someone who chooses to be an individualist. Filipino virtue ethics may not even be given a chance to begin.

Perhaps it is not so productive to translate *kapwa* into English with mystical sounding phrases such as “self in the other” or “shared identity.” Even the clear translations of the 1613 Spanish dictionary “equal,” “both” and “man like me,” all

¹¹⁷ “Ako na naririto ay naroroon na rin, sa isang tagong paraan, sa iba, at kinakailangan ko lamang “mamulat” o “matauhan” sa katotohanang ito upang maging totoo. Kasabay nito, ang hangganan ng daigdig ng loob ay hindi ko alam kung saan nagwawakas o kung magwawakas nga ba ito. Basta ang nararanasan ko, may pagkakataong ito ay lumalawak o kumikitid ayon sa aking pagbubukas sa inaalok na ugnayan ng iba sa akin” (Alejo 1990, 83-84).

¹¹⁸ “Bawat ‘ako’ ay mula sa *kapwa*, *kaloob* ng *kapwa*, naimpluwensiyahan ng *kapwa*. Kahit saan ako tumingin, naroon ang bakas ng aking *kapwa*” (Alejo 1990, 87).

need to be combined together to come close to capturing the concept of *kapwa*. In the end it is perhaps better to just leave *kapwa* as it is and import it whole and intact into the English language. The term only needs to be supported by an awareness of the two traditions that produced it as well as the web of other concepts and virtues that are inextricably bound to it, in particular, the concept of *loób*. Let us review the two traditions that resulted in *kapwa*.

In the Southeast Asian tradition, *kapwa* was embedded in an animism that emphasized the connectivity of all things. This is why de Guia can still legitimately say that *kapwa* endorses “the deeper experiences of mankind, akin to an ancient animist connectedness of feeling one with all creation” (de Guia 2005, 173). It was also originally used only inside a tribal context, and it was restricted to anyone who was inside the tribe. The emphasis was on blood relations and kinship, an emphasis that survives until the present day. The combined result of both connectivity and kinship is best seen in how the spirits of the departed ancestors remained a very powerful and living force in the life of the natives (Scott 1994, 237-238). In any case, what it means to be *kapwa* was learned in the context of the clan and tribe.

It was the Spanish Catholic tradition which expanded the tribal *kapwa* and stretched it into the universal “neighbor” of the Gospels. The Gospels showed that even someone like the Samaritan can show kindness and compassion to someone from an enemy tribe. The earliest book printed in the Philippines in 1593 is the *Doctrina Christiana*, which enjoined the natives to “love your fellow human being just like your own body (*ybigin mo naman ang capoua mo tauo parang ang catauan mo*)” (Doctrina Christiana 1593). *Kapwa* was no longer restricted to people inside the tribe, but was now pushed outward by the force of a religious command. When Enriquez talks about *pagkakaisa* (oneness/unity) as “the highest level of interpersonal interaction possible” and “the full realization” of a *kapwa*-relationship (Enriquez 1992, 64), one should not ignore the Christian strain. Without this Christian expansion the notion of *kapwa* would be stunted in its tribal and exclusivist form. Indeed, as I have indicated in the historical overview (section 2.3.2), the emphasis on individualism has also unfortunately curtailed this expansion. The actual expansion of *kapwa* in Filipino society is obviously still an on-going struggle. De Mesa talks about an “on-going process of change in the [Philippine] worldview as it interacts with the Judaeo-Christian Tradition” moving towards a wider understanding of “neighbor” as that shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan (de Mesa 1987, 204-205). Mercado also expresses a similar optimism in the national expansion of *sakop* (which I take to also mean *kapwa*):

Some observers have pointed out that Philippine society is a collection of clans with selfish interests. The writer disagrees with this judgment because the concept of Filipino is evolving and regional alliances are being surmounted. The Filipino has the mechanism to establish *sakops* [or *kapwa*] everywhere. He can also enlarge his vision of *sakop* [or *kapwa*] so that it may embrace the whole nation. (Mercado 1976, 102)

Because of the layering of the two traditions, the understanding of *kapwa* is quite different from the Western understanding of the Gospel “neighbor.” The “neighbor” might be seen as a fellow citizen in a common state, someone with the same individual rights, etc. However, since the Southeast Asian tradition did not have any notion of a “state” or “individual rights” but was about kinship and tribe, *kapwa* practically amounts to treating the other person as part of one’s family, clan or tribe. This is the basic feature of *kapwa*. This is why even late into the 20th century, Guthrie could still observe that, “family relationships provide the model which many Filipinos follow in as many of their non-family encounters as possible” (Guthrie 1968, 57).¹¹⁹ What it means to treat another person as *kapwa* is learned inside the family, and for that reason treating another as *kapwa* is to treat him or her precisely as family.

I insist that the mixture of the two traditions did not just produce concepts like *kapwa* but reoriented the whole Tagalog language. To repeat what has been said in a previous section (section 3.1.5), though Tagalog has been criticized for lacking metaphysical, technical and logical words, it has a very impressive array of terms when it comes to human relationships, many of which cannot be easily translated into English: *pagmamalasakit*, *pakikiramay*, *pakikiisa*, *pakikisalamuha*, *pakikitungo*, *pakikipagkapwa*, *pagkalinga*, *pag-alaga*, *pag-aaruga*, *pakikisama*, *pakikialam*, *pakikibigay*, etc. This is one of the Tagalog language’s greatest strengths: relationships. It is no wonder that Enriquez can list as many as eight levels of social relationship.¹²⁰ This sophisticated vocabulary and experience of human relationship is the inheritance from the previous two traditions combined.

The cultural accent is less on the metaphysical (awkwardly rendered as *katotohanan* [truth]) and epistemological truth (note the current expression “*sa totoo lang*” [“in truth”]) and more on moral truth, or the relating with *kapwa*.¹²¹ (Miranda 1992, 205)

He says “awkwardly rendered” because the word “*katoto*” means comrade or close friend. Even the word for truth in the Filipino language is not an impersonal or detached truth but connected to the word for a close relationship. Relationship must come first before “truth.”¹²² The world is known and investigated through the

¹¹⁹ This family orientation of the Southeast Asian tradition, as I have pointed out, was not challenged by the Spanish Catholic tradition but only reinforced by it. “The structure and content of the kinship system shows a strong continuity through pre-Hispanic and Spanish times. Ritual kinship has some solid pre-Hispanic underpinnings and was formalized within Roman Catholicism during the Spanish period” (Morais 1979, 47).

¹²⁰ I do not subscribe to his ordering, but it is just indicative of how nuanced the vocabulary is for relationships. For outsiders: *pakikitungo* (level of amenity/civility), *pakikisalamuha* (level of “mixing”), *pakikilahok* (level of joining/participating), *pakikibagay* (level of conforming), and *pakikisama* (level of adjusting). For insiders: *pakikipagpalagayang-loób* (level of mutual trust/rapport), *pakikisangkot* (level of getting involved), and *pakikiisa* (level of fusion, oneness and full trust) (Enriquez 1992, 49-50).

¹²¹ And in a footnote he adds: “Perhaps there one may also find a clue to why we have relatively so few scientists (who seek the truth about reality for its sake) or philosophers (who seek the meaning of things) in contrast to writers and poets (who seek to explain the value of human relationships)” (Miranda 1992, 205). The Philippines is certainly not known for its scientific or technological prowess.

¹²² Interestingly, such a thesis is not unheard of in 20th century Western academic discourse. Cf. *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger 1966).

cooperation of “comrades.” There is some truth to what Miranda says that for the Filipino even the physical universe is a “personalist universe.”

For the Filipino the world is not so much the world of nature as it is the world of persons; indeed, even the physical universe is a personalist universe. *Galaw* or human activity is not oriented to the world and its transformation; it is oriented to the world of human beings. (Miranda 1992, 244)

The Filipino, at least insofar as he is still grounded in these two old traditions, cannot see the universe as “impersonal.” There is always some kind of mediating personal relationship involved. “Relationships are more important than rules and structures. There is little separation between ideas or issues and persons” (Mataragnon 1987, 474). This partially explains the aversion to hard “objective” science or to impersonal “obligations” and “duties” where relationships have been abstracted out.¹²³ The tension goes all the way from “rule-following” (staying in line; obeying traffic lights) to standard government procedures.

The Southeast Asian and Spanish traditions were already starting to be synthesized in the millenarian and revolutionary movements of the second half of the 19th century, especially in their concepts of a universal and spiritual brotherhood, when the Filipino revolution and the subsequent American colonization happened, interrupting this fragile process of synthesis. It was like stunting a slow burning chemical process by throwing in a completely new catalyst—and a quite potent one at that. The American tradition came with its advantages (education and democracy) but also with its disadvantages, in particular the idea of exclusive individualism which is most hostile towards the expansion of *kapwa*. “As the [American] intellectual training progressed, the deeper Pinoy core values eroded gradually, while more and more Filipinos succumbed to that clever device and drudged toward the brave new world of a *kapwa*-less society” (de Guia 2005, 365). There is consensus amongst Filipino scholars that such individualism is the fundamental problem for older, collective values.

We [Filipinos] give higher premium to family interests than to other community interests. We also frown at individualism of any kind. We do not approve of *kanya-kanya* (to each his/her own) trait. In its stead, we emphasize “groupism” as seen in the importance we attach to kinship and *barkada* (peer group; gang) relationships. Even our definition of personalism does not equate with individualism. Instead, it is relationship-oriented, whereby what others say about what we do is often a very important consideration in decision making. (Jocano 1997, 9)

However even in the present cultural shift towards individualism, there is still the opportunity to make a free and deliberate “individual choice” for *kapwa*. In the past *kapwa* was a given, practically non-negotiable, because it was needed for survival or was the default of a homogenous culture. Now *kapwa* (or Filipino virtue

¹²³ Cf. the impersonal duty of Kant which should not be motivated by happiness or any other emotion or desire.

ethics) presents itself as an ethical and moral option that can be “chosen.” Therefore to live out the ethics of *kapwa* means a conscious commitment in the face of many other options, many of which are more popular in light of globalization, Hollywood, and the Internet.¹²⁴

Though it is clear that *kapwa* is the result of Filipino history, there is also the prospect that it can speak to universal human experience.¹²⁵ Enriquez tried to connect *kapwa* with the “collective values shared with the whole of humanity and the deep respect for the dignity and inherent worth of a fellow human being” (Enriquez 1992, 52).¹²⁶ He also calls *kapwa* “humanness at the highest level” (Enriquez 1992, 54). These are statements made in *hope* that the future expansion of the concept of *kapwa* would make it more universal. One could argue that the traditions which produced *kapwa* should not be seen merely as components of Filipino culture, restricted to their historical and geographical boundaries, but parts of the larger narrative of humanity, and which has every right to contribute to that great conversation. It is after all, a meeting between East and West. Enriquez was optimistic that “the ultimate aim of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is to contribute to universal psychology” (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino 2000, 50). There is a universalizing element in *kapwa* that does not end with just the good of the nation but which tries to expand as far as it can. As de Guia also says, “[*kapwa*] reflects a viewpoint that beholds the essential humanity recognizable in everyone, therefore linking (including) people rather than separating (excluding) them from each other” (de Guia 2005, 8). It is expansive rather than exclusive. Alejo agrees with this universal expansion from the point of view of the *loób*: “For it is still a part of the possibility of *loób* to reach the feeling of the *kapwa*, of entire humanity”¹²⁷ (Alejo 1990, 93; translation mine). This is explained, as I have pointed out, by the fact that everyone is already “potentially” a *kapwa*. It just remains to be seen how others interpret and respond to the invitation.

3.2.2 Norris Clarke and a Thomistic metaphysics for *kapwa*

Similar to how I utilized Aquinas’ metaphysics and psychology to help articulate *loób* as a “power of the soul” (section 3.1.2), I would like to further borrow from Thomistic metaphysics in order to articulate *kapwa*, or more precisely, the *loób*’s natural orientation towards the *kapwa*. As has been said, there is no explicit Filipino metaphysical thought because of the lack of emphasis on reason (section 3.1.4). However, this does not mean that a metaphysics cannot be found that would be

¹²⁴ See for example the study of Almond Aguila on how Filipinos attempt to treat each other as *kapwa* through the Internet and social media (Aguila 2014).

¹²⁵ Just as the best ideas of any culture can, such as the Chinese *jen* (“humanity,” “benevolence”) or the South African *ubuntu* (“humanity,” “human kindness”). The South African *ubuntu* is a promising comparison with *kapwa* because South Africa is still historically close to their tribal heritage.

¹²⁶ In another passage he says: “Without *kapwa*, one ceases to be a Filipino. One also ceases to be human” (Enriquez 1992, 76).

¹²⁷ “*Datapat bahagi pa rin ng posibilidad ng loob ang makaabot sa damdamin ng kapwa, ng sangkatauhan*” (Alejo, 1990, 93).

compatible with the concepts of *loób* and *kapwa*. In this regard, I consider Thomistic metaphysics coupled with the innovations of Norris Clarke as providing a promising background metaphysics for *kapwa*, and consequently, for Filipino virtue ethics as a whole. Clarke draws out the notion of “person-in-relation” from the metaphysics of Aquinas, which is able to capture the relational aspect of the *loób* towards the *kapwa*.

This is not just a matter of finding a compatible metaphysics for its own sake. This is also a philosophically strategic move. In this same way that the concept of *loób* was susceptible to many modern misunderstandings because a modern framework was taken for granted, the concept of *kapwa* is also susceptible to modern misinterpretations. For example, Levinas is an attractive thinker for the explication of *kapwa* because of Levinas’ emphasis on the “Other” (*L’autre*). As will be shown later, his “Other” is completely incompatible with *kapwa* (section 3.2.3) because of the underlying assumptions. A suitable metaphysics will be able to preserve the integrity of the concept of *kapwa* from future philosophical misinterpretations.

The criteria is simple: how consistent is this metaphysics with how we have been describing *loób* and *kapwa* so far? Does it respect the unique aspects of Filipino ethical concepts such as their thoroughly relational character? And also, is this metaphysics one of the best choices given other possible options?

Norris Clarke (1915-2008), was a Jesuit priest who obtained his doctorate in philosophy from the Catholic University of Louvain.¹²⁸ Major influences on his thought include Joseph Marechal and Maurice Blondel. He was also inspired by the direction taken by Karol Wojtyla and adopted the goals of Wojtyla’s “Thomist Personalism” as his own.¹²⁹ However, one major difference is that whereas Wojtyla resorted to personalism and phenomenology in order to supplement a perceived lack in Aquinas, Clarke argues that personalist insights can be drawn directly from the metaphysics of Aquinas.

He [Karol Wojtyla] had proposed only complementing the traditional Thomistic metaphysics with the distinct new phenomenology of Christian Personalism, but leaving the traditional Thomistic metaphysics itself untouched. We are carrying his project of integration further by showing how a personalist dimension is actually implicit within the very structure and meaning of being itself in a fully developed Thomistic metaphysics—a key step in our overall project of a “creative retrieval of Saint Thomas.” (Clarke 2009, 227)

¹²⁸ Clarke also managed to have a lecture tour in the Philippines on December 1998 (cf. Arraj 2014). He also published an article in the Philippine journal *Budhi* (Clarke 1997).

¹²⁹ As Wojtyla stated it: “St. Thomas was familiar with the concept of the person and defined it very clearly. This is not to say, however, that he was equally familiar with the problem of personalism or that he presented it as clearly as the problem of the person. We would, however, be correct in thinking that, since he presented the problem of the person so clearly, he also provided at least a point of departure for personalism in general” (Wojtyla 1993b, 165).

The key step taken by Clarke to achieve this “creative retrieval” of Aquinas is to draw out the strong *relational* aspect hidden in Aquinas’ work. He first brought this to the fore in his article “To Be Is to Be Substance-in-Relation” (Clarke 1994b). He showed that though Aquinas only mentions relation infrequently due to the nature of the discussions centering on substance, his entire system is committed to that premise that substances are in constant *active* relation to each other, through their *acts* of existence and through all subsequent acts (on “substance” and “accident,” cf. Glossary in section 1.2). A principal dictum from Aquinas is *agere sequitur esse*, action follows being. Clarke stands in the lineage of Gilson, Fabro, and De Finance¹³⁰ who highlighted that *esse* was itself an act, and he collects the following passages in Aquinas in order to show that a central theme in Aquinas is the notion of real being as intrinsically active and self-communicating:

From the very fact that something exists in act, it is active (*Summa contra gentiles* I, chap. 43).

Active power follows upon being in act, for anything acts in consequence of being in act (*Summa contra gentiles* II, chap. 7).

It is the nature of every actuality to communicate itself insofar as it is possible. Hence every agent acts according as it exists in actuality (*De potentia* q. 2, a. 1).

It follows upon the superabundance proper to perfection as such that the perfection which something has it can communicate to another. Communication follows upon the very intelligibility (*ratio*) of actuality. Hence every form is of itself communicable. (*Summa contra gentiles* III, chap. 64).¹³¹

¹³⁰ Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) was a French medieval historian known as the founder of “existential Thomism,” which highlighted the importance of the concept of “existence” in Aquinas’ thought. Cornelio Fabro (1911-1995) was an Italian priest known for drawing attention to the role played by the Neoplatonic notion of “participation” in Aquinas. Joseph de Finance (1904-2000) was a French priest who wrote a dissertation entitled *l’Être et l’Agir dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (*Being and Acting in the Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*). For an informative survey of Thomistic movements in the 20th century and its major figures, see *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Kerr 2002).

¹³¹ An even lengthier passage expressing the same point: “For natural things have a natural inclination not only towards their own proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible. Hence we see that every agent, in so far as it is perfect and in act, produces its like. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness. Hence, if natural things, in so far as they are perfect, communicate their good to others, much more does it appertain to the divine will to communicate by likeness its own good to others as much as possible (*Res enim naturalis non solum habet naturalem inclinationem respectu proprii boni, ut acquirat ipsum cum non habet, vel ut quiescat in illo cum habet; sed etiam ut proprium bonum in alia diffundat, secundum quod possibile est. Unde videmus quod omne agens, inquantum est actu et perfectum, facit sibi simile. Unde et hoc pertinet ad rationem voluntatis, ut bonum quod quis habet, aliis communicet, secundum quod possibile est. Et hoc praecipue pertinet ad voluntatem divinam, a qua, per quandam similitudinem, derivatur omnis perfectio. Unde, si res naturales, inquantum perfectae sunt, suum bonum aliis communicant, multo magis pertinet ad voluntatem divinam, ut bonum suum aliis per similitudinem communicet, secundum quod possibile est*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 19, a. 2, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 104).

Furthermore, Clarke points out that activity is not just something incidental in things, but contributes to their very perfection:

Every substance exists for the sake of its operations (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 105, a. 5).

Each and every thing shows forth that it exists for the sake of its operation; indeed, operation is the ultimate perfection of each thing (*Summa contra gentiles* III, chap. 113).

This activity and self-communication is the basis of relationality in the metaphysics of Aquinas. It is like being entangled in a great web of being where our actions—indeed, even our very act of existing—send reverberations and ripples to every other thing contained in the web. “Relationality is, therefore, in principle for St. Thomas himself, an equally primordial dimension of being as substantiality. Let us say so explicitly” (Clarke 1993, 15). Such a conception of substance-in-relation goes against modern notions of substance which conceives of it as a self-enclosed and independent identity.¹³² It also stands against the post-modern denial of substance in exclusive favor of relation. But the perfection of being is found fulfilling its dyadic role as a substance-in-relation. “Being as substance, as existing *in itself*, naturally flows over into being as relational, as turned *towards others* by its self-communicating action. *To be* fully is to be *substance-in-relation*”¹³³ (Clarke 1993, 14).

One can perhaps see how this has affinities with the Southeast Asian animist notion of “connectivity.” There too, nature is conceived as having a constant and powerful influence, a kind of personal energy, that relates everything together. In showing the relational aspect of Aquinas, Clarke is also able to show a common ground between the Southeast Asian and Medieval traditions. At the very least, one can safely say that there is more compatibility between the animist worldview and this metaphysics than with the metaphysics of Descartes or Kant.

The medievals, especially St. Thomas, restored in principle the complementarity between substance and relation by their doctrine of real being as intrinsically ordered toward action and self-communication; for all action necessarily generates a web of relations between agents and recipients... The notion of the human being as by nature

¹³² “The intrinsic structure of all being is irreducibly dyadic: *substance-in-relation*. The dichotomizing of being into one or the other is due to one or more of the successive distortions of the original meaning of substance: the self-enclosed substance of Descartes, the inert, unknowable substance of Locke, or the separable substance of Hume” (Clarke 1994b, 113).

¹³³ Eventually Clarke refined his formulation in order to include the aspect of “receptivity,” something that is not found in Aquinas but is emphasized in Hans Urs Von Balthasar. “But in every finite (created) substance there is a more primordial relation of receptivity constitutive of its very being before it can pour over into action at all: namely, that it has received its very act of existence from another, ultimately from God, the Source of all existence. Thus we should describe every created being as possessing its own existence *from another*, *in itself*, and oriented *toward others*—a triadic rather than just a dyadic structure... being from another, being in itself, being toward others, or, in the luminous terseness of the Latin, *esse ab*, *esse in*, *esse ad*” (Clarke 1994b, 119).

social, hence as imbedded in a web of relations to others in the social and political community, also clearly implied the key role of relations. This aspect is quite explicit in Aristotle too. (Clarke 1994b, 103)

As the above passage suggests, after establishing substance-in-relation as an intrinsic principle of Thomist metaphysics Clarke can easily shift to talking about *persons-in-relation*. The person too is a substance-in-relation.¹³⁴ However the person is of a higher-order than all the other things of nature and is able to actively communicate in a more profound way. A person can reveal more of himself especially to other persons, and this constitutes not just a natural activity but also the means to a person's perfection. The saying "no man is an island" definitely applies here. "The person is intrinsically ordered toward togetherness with other human persons—and any other persons accessible to it—i.e., toward *friendship, community, and society*" (Clarke 1994a, 219).

Consider Clarke's quote below and try to replace the word "person" with the word "*loób*" and "others" with the word "*kapwa*":

To be a person, then, is to be a bi-polar being that is at once present *in itself*, actively possessing itself by its self-consciousness (its substantial pole), and also actively oriented *toward others*, toward active loving self-communication to others (its relational pole). To be an authentic person, in a word, is to be a *lover*, to live a life of *inter-personal* self-giving and receiving. Person is essentially a "we" term. Person exists in its fullness only in the plural. (Clarke 1994a, 218)

This has many similarities in how I have described the *loób* as a "relational will" constantly directed towards the *kapwa* (section 3.1.5). Also, insofar as *loób* is conceived of as a "holistic (undivided) will" (section 3.1.4), it represents the whole person to such an extent that one can easily substitute *loób* for "person" in the above passage without any serious contradiction. I also talked about how the *loób* actualizes its fullest potential through *kapwa* relationships (section 3.2.1). It is part of the "expansion" and "widening" of the *loób*. Clarke speaks in similar terms stating, "to be a person is to be intrinsically expansive, ordered toward self-manifestation and self-communication" (Clarke 1993, 71). Just as the human person comes into the world and grows only through relationships with others¹³⁵, its perfection and fulfilment is attained only through establishing relationships of love to as many other persons as possible.

To be authentically for a human person is to *live in love*, to express itself by loving, in the broadest sense of the term, to make itself the center of the widest possible web of relationships to all things, and especially to all persons, through our two major self-

¹³⁴ "A person, like every other real being, is a living synthesis of substantiality and relationality, and the relational side is equally important as the substantial side, because it is only through the former that the self as substance can actualize its potentiality and fulfill its destiny" (Clarke 1993, 64).

¹³⁵ "The human person, in fact, comes into existence enveloped in a web of relations of dependence on others even before it can begin to generate its own relations actively" (Clarke 1994b, 118).

relating and self-transcending powers, knowledge and love. To live as a person is to live in relation. (Clarke 1994b, 117)

The constantly relational character of both *loób* and *kapwa* is adequately captured by the Thomistic metaphysics of Clarke. On the other hand, *loób* and *kapwa* would be inevitably suffocated by the modern metaphysics of an “isolated, atomic individual.”¹³⁶ Filipino ethical concepts need a metaphysics in which relationship is an ever present aspect of the person. Just as the perfection of the person according to Clarke is determined by the expansion and widening of the sphere of relationships in love, the same goes for the *loób* whose “beauty” (*kagandahang-loób*) or “goodness” (*kabutihang-loób*) is determined by the breadth and quality of its relationships with *kapwa*:

Loob, as man’s core, is also an appropriate concept to describe a person in relationship to others because it provides an insight as to what kind of person one is. You are aware, I am sure, that contemporary psychology has brought out strongly the point that the *person is defined by his relationship to others*. In the lowland Philippines, this can be done by describing what sort of *loob* he has. A person, for instance, is said to be of “*magandang-loob*” [beautiful willed] or alternatively, of “*mabuting-loob*” [good willed] because he generally relates well and positively towards others. (de Mesa 1987, 57-58)

The interesting thing about Clarke’s metaphysics is that it is in one way old and in one way completely new. It is, as he shows, grounded on the metaphysics of Aquinas, but it is certainly not a “traditional” reading of Aquinas’ metaphysics. He emphasizes an aspect of it that is not extensively emphasized by Aquinas himself (the quotes that he uses from Aquinas are quite short and scattered). His “creative retrieval” is influenced partially by Personalism, but he was also in dialogue with philosophers such as A. N. Whitehead who elevated relation as the highest principle without any substance. It is perhaps a very fortunate coincidence that in addressing these contemporary influences he was able to introduce a metaphysics that is, for all intents and purposes, perfectly suited to undergird *loób* and *kapwa*. I claim that it can provide a “protective habitat” for such Filipino concepts in order to protect them from modern misinterpretations. It may be a temporary arrangement until an original Filipino metaphysics can be developed, but I imagine that will take a long time given the non-metaphysical character of the Filipino language itself.

One can judge the appropriateness of using Thomist metaphysics to undergird Filipino concepts by comparing it with other philosophical options. In the next section I will see how *kapwa* fares in comparison to more modern philosophies with an emphasis on an “other.” It will be shown that the underlying presuppositions of

¹³⁶ “The notion of the self, the person, as primordially an isolated, atomic individual, only accidentally related to others, came in much later, with Descartes and Locke. It is as alien to the classical and medieval Christian tradition, both theological and philosophical, as their notions of substance are to the classical and medieval one of substance as active relation-generating center” (Clarke 1994b, 118).

these philosophies cannot capture the concept of *kapwa* and may at times directly contradict it.

3.2.3 *Kapwa* in comparison to other ethical theories

At first glance one may imagine similarities between the concept of *kapwa* and the Other (*L'autre*) of Levinas. The work of Levinas brought the notion of “alterity” into vogue and espoused a responsibility for the other which was neglected in the 20th century, as graphically portrayed in the horrific events of World War II. It seems as though Levinas is also talking about the primacy of human relationships and would be a suitable partner for *kapwa*. However for Levinas the Other is completely different from the self; he says it is like the concept of infinity (*Infini*) (Levinas 1961). The concept of infinity cannot be comprehended or circumscribed, or in Levinas’ words, *totalized*. It resists any similarity or common understanding.

The idea of Infinity is transcendence itself, the overflowing of an adequate idea. If totality can not be constituted it is because Infinity does not permit itself to be integrated. It is not the insufficiency of the I that prevents totalization, but the Infinity of the Other. (Levinas 1969, 80)

In this regard Levinas cannot speak of an equality or similarity between the I and the Other, but an “asymmetry of the interpersonal” (Levinas 1969, 215). His “Other” is not just any kind of “other.” We sometimes think of “other” as another individual of the same species or genus. But on the contrary,

Levinas is at such pains to distinguish his notion of alterity from any kind of merely formal or relative difference that he says that the I and the Other are so little in relation that they cannot be said to share a concept in common, not even that of number. The other in this sense is not another like me, an *alter ego*... Rather, the other is other with an alterity “constitutive” of its very content. (Perpich 2008, 18)

This is in extreme opposition to the concepts of *loób* and *kapwa* which are conceived as equals and as symmetrical reflections of each other. The *kapwa* is another *loób* like myself. And moreover, there are natural patterns such as that of kinship and tribe that mold my understanding of *kapwa*. The other is *kapwa* because I insist on treating him like my own family, clan, or tribe, and I do not think of family members as extremely “other” in the way that Levinas describes. But on the other hand for Levinas, “alterity is strangeness... The other has a tribal link with no one” (Levinas 2001, 109). In this regard we can say that the “Other” of Levinas is incompatible with *kapwa*. This point has already been noticed by Jaime Guevara who did a comparative study between *kapwa* and the Other of Levinas.

For Levinas, the other is infinitely irreducible. This is why the relationship between the two is not about a unity of similarities. Rather, Levinas describes the relationship as one of asymmetry. Since, there is no essential similarity, but only an essential difference between the self and the other, the other cannot be said to be like the self and vice versa. The other is merely different... For Levinas, there is nothing “shared”

between the self and the other. The notion of “shared identity” does not fit in his philosophy. Yet, Filipinos do experience “shared identity.” (Guevara 2005, 13)

According to Guevara, the same is the case, though in a milder way, for another contemporary Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber.¹³⁷ Their perspectives deny the possibility of genuine unity (*pagkakaisa*) between *loób* and *kapwa* which is the goal or *telos* of Filipino virtue ethics. Though initially it might be very attractive to relate Levinas with *kapwa* simply because they both refer to the nature of human relationship, one must be careful to situate them in their own historical contexts. Levinas was someone who tried to “retrieve” or “restore” the lost sense of human relationship, especially after the devastating events of WWII. But as much as he tried to undermine the philosophical biases of his time he could not escape the specter of Descartes which was ever present in his work. Indeed, even his notion of Infinity is one that he borrowed and reappropriated from Descartes. On the other hand, for *loób* and *kapwa* there is nothing to “retrieve.” Relationships do not have to be “rediscovered” because they have not yet been “lost.” They are still, and ought to remain, the given. Human relationship is taken for granted by Filipino concepts. Furthermore these concepts are guided not by the extremes of Cartesian dualism and infinity, but by the primal experience of kinship and family, the natural relationships of flesh and blood. It is in this sense that Levinas’ radical alterity is quite different and opposed to it.

If Levinas is an unfit partner for *kapwa* then perhaps there is more promise in feminist philosophy. Leonardo de Castro for example has called *kagandahang-loób* a “feminine” concept and identified similarities between it and the feminist ethics of care of Nel Noddings (de Castro 2000). Noddings considers the caring relationship to be the cornerstone of her feminist ethics. In contrast with the radically distant I and Other of Levinas, Noddings talks about the “one-caring” and the “cared-for.”¹³⁸ The natural pattern of this caring relationship is the one between a mother and her child, the pattern which has been neglected by the more “patriarchal” modern ethics that prioritizes impersonal and abstract conceptions of justice.

Ethics has been discussed largely in the language of the father: in principles and propositions, in terms such as justification, fairness, justice. The mother's voice has been silent. Human caring and the memory of caring and being cared for, which I shall argue form the foundation of ethical response, have not received attention except as outcomes of ethical behavior. (Noddings 1984, 1)

The mother’s caring for her child does not require the extensive and abstract reasoning processes of Kant or utilitarianism. It just naturally and spontaneously happens without any theory or deliberation. It involves an empathy or “feeling with”

¹³⁷ “Martin Buber basically agrees with Levinas in that the other is irreducible to any categories of thought set up by the ego. Buber recognizes the other’s way of authentic existence as essentially different from the self” (Guevara 2005, 14).

¹³⁸ “A caring relation requires the engrossment and motivational displacement of the one-caring, and it requires the recognition and spontaneous response of the cared-for” (Noddings 1984, 78).

the other that “does not first penetrate the other but receives the other” (Noddings 1984, 31). In this regard there are certainly affinities with the *loób* which is not primarily “rational” but relational, emotional and volitional in reaching out to the *kapwa*. It involves a sympathetic concern for the other person’s well-being. Consider what de Guia says about *kagandahang-loób*:

Habitual openness towards the Other, devoid of selfish intentions, results in unobtrusive caring. This attitude is characteristic of Filipino personhood. As with altruistic mother love, no strings are attached. (de Guia 2005, 300)

The emphasis on relationships over individualism is also a major point of similarity between the feminist ethics of care and Filipino virtue ethics. “The ethics of care usually works with a conception of persons as relational, rather than as the self-sufficient independent individuals of the dominant moral theories” (Held 2006, 13).¹³⁹ Relationship is considered a basic principle in the ethics of care, not something that needs to be added on *after* considering the individual. “Taking *relation* as ontologically basic simply means that we recognize human encounter and affective response as a basic fact of human existence” (Noddings 1984, 4).

There are at least three points in the ethics of care which are aligned with Filipino virtue ethics: 1) the importance of empathy and “feeling with” over rationality, 2) the basic principle of relationship over individualism, and 3) the paradigm of the mother’s caring relationship for her child. Given these three points of contact, care ethics is no doubt more similar to Filipino virtue ethics than the ethics of Levinas. The third point, the paradigm of motherhood, will be elaborated later in the section on *kagandahang-loób* (section 4.2.2).

However, just as is the case with Levinas we need to situate care ethics in its proper historical context. The ethics of care, which began only in the 1980s in the US thanks to philosophers such as Sara Ruddick, Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and Virginia Held, is tied to the Feminist Liberation movement of the 1960s and 70s, or the so-called “second wave of feminism.” Its main goals were more political, social, and economic equality for women. The ethics of care was conceived as a feminist alternative to the dominant patriarchal theories of ethics, namely Kant, Utilitarianism, and variants of Aristotelian virtue ethics. But this American movement does not share the same historical traditions which were formative for Filipino virtue ethics, namely the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition. American ethicists of care would probably be averse to embracing the animist undertones and the tribal mentality¹⁴⁰ fueling *loób* and *kapwa*, and of course the influences of a Spanish Catholicism would be criticized as obsolete. The modern feminist movement is precisely that: modern. Furthermore,

¹³⁹ In contrast to the more individualist notions of virtue ethics, Held says: “virtue ethics focuses especially on the states of character of individuals, whereas the ethics of care concerns itself especially with *caring relations*. Caring relations have primary value” (Held 2006, 19).

¹⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that the native American Indians were mostly eradicated by the settlers, sparing American culture from a corresponding “primitive” tradition.

though Filipino virtue ethics does elevate the mother's relationship with her child it is not limited to that; rather all family and tribal relationships are included such as the paternal, sibling, and cousin relationships. Filipino virtue ethics is only maternal insofar as it is familial and tribal, and the family and tribe cannot survive without mothers. So even though there are many similarities with care ethics on the surface, there are many differences due to history and context. Nevertheless, I think that one can still engage productively in dialogue, especially since both ethical frameworks share a frustration over individualism and impersonal ethical theory.

Finally, as was mentioned earlier, Kant provides the closest modern philosophical parallel to *loób* (with serious distortions, of course). Can it also be a candidate for *kapwa*? The following is the criticism of Guevara.

Kant demands that every human being be treated as an end. This may sound as if Kant were concerned for the other. Closer examination reveals his real intentions. Kant upholds the absolute status of rational ethical principles. In other words, Kant treats man as an end because he is their [the rational ethical principles'] bearer. This goes against the grain of *pakikipagkapwa* for this value requires that the other is treated as he is, and not for what is contained in him... Kant's ethics, in effect, denies the fundamental relationship between the self and the other. In emphasizing Reason, which is only one of the faculties of a human being, Kant suppresses the other. More importantly, he silences the whole being of the other into submission to the dictates of Reason. (Guevara 2005, 16)

For Guevara valuing the other person primarily because of his rationality or his moral autonomy cannot be the basis of a *kapwa* relationship. The idea of treating the other as an end guarantees that the other is treated with dignity and respect, which is good, but it can be reduced to the bare minimum of simply not treating the other as a means. Indeed, when Kant talks about the "kingdom of ends" he seems to describe people just minding their own business, legislating moral laws for themselves according to reason, and having a well-ordered society. The idea of "caring" and being "cared for," as the feminists argue, seem to have no place in Kant's ethics. There is little role for mothers or children in this society.

Kant does talk about a relationship between self and other, namely friendship, in his more neglected *Metaphysics of Morals*. He says "*Friendship* (considered in its perfection) is the union of two persons through equal mutual love and respect" (Kant [1797] 1996b, [6:469]). The final end of friendship is intimate communication or mutual disclosure. However Kant's idea of friendship is much more cautious even than its Aristotelian counterpart. It is an ideal that is "unattainable in practice" because complete equality between friends cannot be attained. It is something that we should strive for, but we must accept that it will always be imperfect. The caution and reserve of Kant involves preserving the most stable equality between friends.

Kant advises us on grounds of prudence never to open ourselves fully to our friend but always to conduct ourselves to our friend as one who might later be our enemy and use our revelations against us. Friends must also be cautious in the giving and

receiving of favors, in view of the tension within friendship between love and respect. Perfect friendship requires mutual respect, which will be threatened by too much love, too much familiarity, too much openness. Further, friends must be careful not to go too far in their generosity to one another, since friendship requires perfect equality, and if the benefits conferred are too one sided, then the debt of gratitude incurred by one friend may undermine the respect of the other. (Wood 1999, 282)

Even in friendship one is not commended for acts of self-sacrifice or self-giving, especially if it is driven by “irrational” emotions of kindness and sympathy.¹⁴¹ “[Kant’s] ethics lacks the empathy which *pakikipagkapwa* promotes and develops to a high degree” (Guevara 2005, 16). There is also no attempt at “unity” (*pagkakaisa*) or strengthening the bond with the other. One can almost imagine that Kant’s views of the friend sanctions the kind of reclusive lifestyle that Kant himself lived, one which discouraged intense personal attachments or huge displays of emotion.

Kant goes so far here as to claim that the ultimate basis of friendship should lie with *duty*, in moral benevolence rather than in feelings of affection or considerations of mutual advantage. To have moral worth, what we do for our friends must be done because it is our duty, **not because we care for them**. (Sullivan 1989, 360; emphasis mine)

So even though Kant also talks about “friendship,” his idea of friendship does not come close to the dynamic between *loób* and *kapwa*. Filipino virtue ethics is not guided by a sense of “duty” as much as it is guided by a sense of “care.” In this sense there is a clear alliance between Filipino virtue ethics and the feminist ethics of care against Kant. Guevara is also right that the *kapwa* is not defined by rationality. Instead, Filipino virtue ethics looks at *loób*, which is a “holistic and relational will” that is different from the autonomous will of Kant. It is a will that is constantly in relationship and seeking to positively expand those relationships.

To sum up, the greatest similarity between Filipino virtue ethics and a modern ethical theory can be found, with important qualifications, in the feminist ethics of care. On the other hand the philosophies of Levinas and Kant clearly contradict the concept of *kapwa*. Overall, I think that any potential gains from using these modern philosophies to help articulate Filipino concepts do not outweigh the gains from using Thomistic philosophy. Even the mother-aspect of feminist philosophy can be drawn out from the “person-in-relation” of Clarke.¹⁴² Of course, productive

¹⁴¹ “There is a sharp contrast with the Kantian concept of duty and moral worth. For the agent needs to be motivated by such emotions as pity, sympathy, love and charity. There can be no *kagandahang loob* if a person performs his duties without positive emotional involvement” (de Castro 1998).

¹⁴² “The human person as child first goes out towards the world as poor, as appealingly but insistently needy. The primary response partner is the mother, who meets the growing person’s needs ideally with caring love. First she responds to the physical and basic psychic needs, then slowly draws forth over the early years the active interpersonal response of the child as an I to herself as Thou, by her active relating to the child precisely as a loving I to a unique, special, and beloved Thou, not just as a useful or interesting object or thing, or another instance of human nature” (Clarke 1993, 73).

comparisons could be made with non-Western ethics such as Confucian ethics and the South African *ubuntu* philosophy but that must be reserved for the future.

3.3 *Pagkakaisa*: the goal of Filipino virtue ethics

If the goal or *telos* of Aristotle's virtue ethics is *eudaimonia* (literally, "having a good guardian spirit," but generally means "happiness") and the goal of Aquinas' virtue ethics is *beatitudo* (beatitude), the goal of Filipino virtue ethics is *pagkakaisa* (unity or oneness). Enriquez identified *pagkakaisa* as the culmination of the relationship with the *kapwa*.

Pagkakaisa is also the highest level of interpersonal interaction possible. It can be said that being one with another is a full realization of *pakikipagkapwa* [interaction with the *kapwa*]. At this level of interaction, there is total trust and identification among the parties involved. (Enriquez 1992, 64)

Pagkakaisa taken on its own is a vague concept. When one says "unity" or "oneness" between two people one will tend to ask, "what kind of oneness?" and "how is this oneness achieved?" Surely it does not mean a physical oneness. Is it then a sentimental oneness? A matter of *feeling one* with the other? Insofar as *pagkakaisa* is not grounded in other Filipino ethical concepts, it remains vague. It is only through the articulation of the concepts of *loób*, *kapwa* and the Filipino virtues that we can have a clear idea of what *pagkakaisa* is and how it is achieved.

Pagkakaisa is the unity of "holistic and relational wills." This means that the *loób* and *kapwa* will the same things for their combined good, and they both have a commitment to the preservation and strengthening of their relationship. The closest term for this in Aquinas is "concord" (*concordia*):

For concord, properly speaking, is between one man and another, in so far as the wills of various hearts agree together in consenting to the same thing.¹⁴³

According to Aquinas, "concord" is not the same thing as "peace." Peace is wider than concord and includes concord since peace may be between persons or be within oneself in terms of quieting one's personal desires.¹⁴⁴ Concord meanwhile is clearly between "one man and another." This concord is not obtained by two people in an instant. It is the result of a virtue, namely, charity. It is also not a matter of "thinking" the same things but willing the same things. "Concord which is an effect of charity, is union of wills not of opinions."¹⁴⁵ It is completely possible for two people to have divergent ideas, backgrounds, and personalities, but as long as they will the same thing, then they can be said to have concord.

¹⁴³ "Concordia enim proprie sumpta est ad alterum in quantum scilicet diversorum cordium voluntates simul in unum consensum conveniunt" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 29, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1314).

¹⁴⁴ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 29, a. 1.

¹⁴⁵ "Concordia quae est caritatis effectus est unio voluntatum, non unio opinionum" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 37, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1353).

Similarly, *pagkakaisa* does not require that two people be exactly alike. They may be different in many respects, but what is important is that their wills (*loóbs*) generally will the same thing. Also the “total trust and identification” that Enriquez talks about (Enriquez 1992, 64) does not happen in an instant. It requires the practice of the Filipino virtues. In this sense, one cannot really understand what *pagkakaisa* means if one is ignorant of the Filipino virtues which draw the *loób* and *kapwa* closer to will the same things for their common good.

The importance of the concept of *pagkakaisa* shows that Filipino virtue ethics is “teleological,” it has a *telos* or goal. The relationship between the virtues and the *telos* is the same in Filipino virtue ethics and Aristotelian virtue ethics.

It is the *telos* of man as a species which determines what human qualities are virtues. We need to remember however that although Aristotle treats the acquisition and exercise of the virtues as means to an end, the relationship of means to end is internal and not external. I call a means internal to a given end when the end cannot be adequately characterized independently of a characterization of the means. So it is with the virtues and the *telos* which is the good life for man on Aristotle’s account. (MacIntyre 1985, 184)

The Filipino virtues are important because they are both a means to, and also constitutive of, unity or *pagkakaisa*, which is practically the Filipino understanding of happiness or the good life. Filipino culture, grounded on its tribal mentality, cannot conceive of happiness or the good life in individualistic terms, it can only conceive of a relational flourishing.

When Enriquez was writing on *kapwa* and *pagkakaisa*, there was a dramatic political precedent in his mind – none other than the EDSA People Power Revolution of 1986 (Enriquez 1992, 90). Millions of people converged on the EDSA highway to stand in front of tanks and armed soldiers and overthrow the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. It was a peaceful revolution which showed the “unity” of the people against an oppressive regime. The people willed the same thing for their common good.

This was the background in which the optimism of Filipino psychology was born. However, such a dramatic showing of unity was short-lived. After the EDSA Revolution, things reverted back to their normal state of a “confusion of traditions” (cf. section 2.3.3). Perhaps it is safe to say that before a sustainable *pagkakaisa* can be reached on a wide scale, it must be consistently practiced on a small scale. To practice it consistently on a small scale requires a clear knowledge of the Filipino virtues that are meant to lead towards *pagkakaisa*.

In this chapter I have discussed the “two pillars” of Filipino virtues ethics, *loób* and *kapwa*, and the goal of Filipino virtue ethics which is *pagkakaisa*. In response to the modern misinterpretations of *loób*, I have presented a viable alternative using Aquinas’ metaphysics and psychology by interpreting *loób* as a “power of the soul.” This “power of the soul” is able to be the subject of Filipino ethical concepts as

“habits.” Insofar as they are good habits, they are also “virtues.” Filipino ethical concepts can reasonably be said to constitute a “virtue ethics.” I also showed that the *loób* is a “holistic and relational will” in contrast to the will (*voluntas*) of Aquinas. It is holistic in that it contains all the powers of the soul, and it is relational in that it is always directed towards the *kapwa*.

I talked about the *kapwa* being the second-person perspective of *loób*. It was not necessary to posit a *labas* (outside) for the *loób*, especially in the sense of subjectivity-objectivity, since the *kapwa* already suffices. I introduced Clarke’s Thomistic metaphysics of “substance-in-relation” and “person-in-relation” as a suitable metaphysics for *kapwa* which can protect it from modern misinterpretations such as those suffered by *loób*. Thomistic philosophy is able to describe *kapwa* more than the philosophy of Levinas, the feminist ethics of care, or Kant.

Finally, I explained the goal or *telos* of Filipino virtue ethics which is unity or oneness (*pagkakaisa*). Taken on its own, *pagkakaisa* is a vague concept. The understanding of *pagkakaisa* hinges on the proper understanding of *loób*, *kapwa*, and the virtues that move in between them to preserve and strengthen a relationship. It is to the articulation and organization of these Filipino virtues that we now turn.

4 The Filipino Virtues

The previous three chapters provided the necessary background for the analysis that will be presented in this chapter. Chapter 1 introduced the framework of virtues versus values. Chapter 2 presented the historical context for the intellectual traditions that produced Filipino ethical concepts. Chapter 3 began the actual application of Thomistic metaphysics and psychology on key Filipino concepts *loób* and *kapwa* in order to articulate them more precisely and lay solid foundations for a discussion of the Filipino virtues themselves. These Filipino virtues, as I have said, are “habits” of the *loób* (section 3.1.3). The task of the Filipino virtues is to bring the *loób* and *kapwa* closer together to “unity” or “oneness” (*pagkakaisa*).

Whereas the focus of the previous chapter was primarily on the “articulation” of key Filipino ethical concepts, the focus of this chapter is both “articulation” and “organization.” I will use Aquinas’ own organization of his principal virtues as an organizing principle for the Filipino virtues. As I said in the beginning, part of the problem with the use of “values” is that it could not really explain how Filipino “values” were interrelated and how they all worked together (cf. section 1.4.2). Because of this, Filipino “values” tended to be studied in isolation and not as parts of a systematic whole. This could understandably lead to misinterpretations of these “values” simply because they are taken out of a complete context. On the other hand, the use of Thomistic metaphysics and psychology in the previous chapter laid the foundation for Filipino virtues by identifying them as “habits” of a power of the soul (the *loób*), directed towards an object (the *kapwa*), and with a specific goal or *telos* (*pagkakaisa*). That already puts them in a more proper “enclosure”; it segregates them from all other so-called “Filipino values.” I will now arrange the Filipino virtues within this “enclosure” by borrowing Aquinas’ own schematic arrangement for his principal virtues. By arranging Filipino virtues as “counterparts” to Aquinas’ virtues, the Filipino virtues become more orderly and systematic; their dynamics become more transparent as they are linked in the right way to the other virtues. In the process of comparison, which is grounded in similarities, the main difference between the Filipino virtues and Aquinas’ virtues also becomes clear: the Filipino virtues are much more thoroughly “relational” in their orientation than the virtues of Aquinas.

There is at the same time a deeper “articulation” of these Filipino virtues. By building on the Thomistic foundations already laid down in the previous chapters, I am in a position to correct misinterpretations by contemporary scholars. Just as the other Filipino ethical concepts like *loób* and *kapwa* were vulnerable to modern misinterpretations, the same goes for these Filipino ethical concepts which I call “virtues.” Thomistic foundations allow me to make corrections when needed. For example, I will defend *hiya* from negative interpretations and explain how and why it is a “virtue” by differentiating a “virtue” from a “passion” (section 4.5.1). For the most

part, however, I intend to be as faithful as possible to how Filipino scholars have described the workings of these virtues and how they are observed in real life. After each Filipino virtue has been discussed in detail, I will provide a short synthesis showing how they all cooperate and work together to achieve their goal (section 4.7).

4.1 Thomist virtue ethics as the organizing framework

I will first introduce the virtue ethics of Aquinas and show why it is a very promising resource to help “articulate” and “organize” the Filipino virtues. The virtue ethics of Aquinas is contained mostly in the second part (*Secunda Pars*) of the *Summa Theologiae*, as well as in the *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus*) and the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* (*Sententia libri ethicorum*).¹⁴⁶ He presents a sophisticated development of the ethics found in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Though many of the virtues that he lists in his own account come from Aristotle, the organization of the virtues under the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, and courage) does not come from Aristotle but from Plato, from his *Republic* in particular.¹⁴⁷ Also, in addition to the four cardinal virtues from the Greeks, he lists three theological virtues from the Christian tradition (faith, hope, and love). This makes seven principal virtues in the ethics of Aquinas. All the other virtues that can be found in either Aristotle or the New Testament are grouped under one or another of these seven principal virtues. In other words, Aquinas does not merely echo Aristotle but synthesizes him with the Platonic and Christian traditions in order to develop something new.¹⁴⁸ Despite the Christian infusion, the astounding scope of Aquinas’ project allows even an atheist like Philippa Foot to say:

It is my opinion that the *Summa Theologica* is one of the best sources we have for moral philosophy, and moreover that St. Thomas’s ethical writings are as useful to the atheist as to the Catholic or other Christian believer. (Foot 1978, 2)

The primary definition of virtue that Aquinas mostly prefers is not that of Aristotle (*arête* or excellence) but that of Augustine (pieced together by Peter Lombard): “Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of

¹⁴⁶ For a comprehensive introduction to the many facets of Aquinas’ ethics, see the essays collected in *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Pope, 2002).

¹⁴⁷ For a survey of this synthesis of Aquinas see the introduction of R. E. Houser in *The Cardinal Virtues* (2004). Aquinas is also aware that Aristotle did not identify the four cardinal virtues as such: “As some have explained, [he is] perfect in the four cardinal virtues. But this interpretation does not seem to be according to the mind of Aristotle who has never been found making such an enumeration (*Perfectus quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus [est], ut quidam exponunt. Sed hoc non videtur esse secundum intentionem Aristotelis, qui nunquam invenitur talem enumerationem facere*)” (*Sententia libri ethicorum*, lib. 1, l. 16, n. 7; Litzinger trans. 1993, 64).

¹⁴⁸ The “radically non-Aristotelian” character of Aquinas’ ethics is a current topic of investigation. See for example *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas’ Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (Pinsent 2012). Pinsent argues that any discussion of the complete ethics of Aquinas must also include his views of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, beatitudes, and the fruits.

which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us”¹⁴⁹ (cf. Kent 2002, 119-120). This is because he places a higher priority on the “infused” virtues that come from God over the “acquired” virtues which can naturally be obtained through practice.¹⁵⁰ But Aquinas also says that if we remove the phrase “which God works in us, without us,” the definition would apply to virtues in general, both acquired and infused virtues.¹⁵¹ Since there is no intention to define Filipino virtues as either infused or acquired virtues, this truncated definition is enough for our present purpose.

One of the most important elements in Aquinas’ system is the notion of a “cardinal” virtue. There are four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, and courage. “We call a virtue ‘cardinal,’ in the sense of being fundamental, since it supports the other virtues the way a hinge supports a door.”¹⁵² Elsewhere he says: “The cardinal virtues are called more fundamental than all the others not because they are more perfect than the others but because human life turns on them in a more fundamental way.”¹⁵³ The cardinal virtues are closely connected to the structure of the soul as Aquinas understands it—which is again a synthesis of the Greek and Christian understanding of the soul.

In the soul’s rational part there are two powers: an appetitive power, called “will,” and a cognitive power, called “reason.” Accordingly, in the soul’s rational part there are two cardinal virtues: prudence in reason, and justice in the will. Furthermore, in the concupiscible appetite there is temperance, while there is courage in the irascible appetite.¹⁵⁴

Aquinas, therefore, attributes a cardinal virtue for each power of the soul: prudence for reason, justice for the will, temperance for the concupiscible appetite, and courage for the irascible appetite (cf. Glossary in section 1.2). Each virtue perfects something in the operation of the respective power with regards to the moral

¹⁴⁹ “*Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nullus male utitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 55, a. 4, obj. 1; Fathers trans. 1947, 821).

¹⁵⁰ There is some debate about whether the list of cardinal virtues in the *Summa Theologiae* II-II qq. 47-170 are primarily infused virtues or acquired virtues (Pinsent 2012, 66-67). Whether or not they are infused, acquired, or both is not so crucial for our discussion.

¹⁵¹ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 55, a. 4.

¹⁵² “*Virtus aliqua dicitur cardinalis, quasi principalis, quia super eam aliae virtutes firmanantur sicut ostium in cardine*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 12, ad 24; Hause trans. 2010, 84). David Oderberg states that the “Cardinality Thesis” means that the four virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) are the only cardinal virtues and no other. It is divided into three sub-theses, “the first being that the cardinal virtues are jointly necessary for the possession of every other virtue, the second that each of the virtues is a species of one of the four cardinals, and the third that many of the other virtues are also auxiliaries of one or more cardinals” (Oderberg 1999).

¹⁵³ “*Virtutes cardinales dicuntur principales omnibus aliis, non quia sunt omnibus aliis perfectiores, sed quia in eis principaliter versatur humana vita, et super eas aliae virtutes fundantur*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 5, a. 1, ad 12; Hause trans. 2010, 232).

¹⁵⁴ “*In parte rationali sunt duae virtutes, scilicet appetitiva, quae vocatur voluntas; et apprehensiva, quae vocatur ratio. Unde in parte rationali sunt duae virtutes cardinales: prudentia quantum ad rationem, iustitia quantum ad voluntatem. In concupiscibili autem temperantia; sed in irascibili fortitudo*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 12, ad 25; Hause trans. 84-85).

life. In contrast to these three powers, the Filipino *loób* is just one power (a “holistic and relational will”) which virtually contains all the other powers. Because it is just one power it is difficult to “organize” the Filipino virtues simply on the basis of *loób*. However, if we borrow the arrangement of Aquinas, it provides a useful pattern for organizing the Filipino virtues *as if* the *loób* could be dissected into its constituent parts, as indeed Miranda has already attempted to do in his own analysis of *loób* (cf. section 3.1.4). This will serve as our main organizing principle, and it will be explained more below.

Another aspect of Aquinas’ virtue ethics is the idea that the seven principal virtues can have parts. For Aquinas, a secondary virtue (a “part” of the principal virtue) can either be an “integral,” “subjective,” or “potential” part.¹⁵⁵ An “integral” part is related to the cardinal virtue just as the roof, the foundation, and the walls are related to a house. They constitute the perfection of the virtue and are necessary for its perfect act. For example, Aquinas considers eight integral parts for prudence including “memory” and “shrewdness.”¹⁵⁶ If one does not have “memory”¹⁵⁷, then one would not be able to judge a present circumstance prudently in comparison to past experiences. One would, therefore, fail to be prudent in general; the absence of “memory” renders the virtue of prudence impossible. Prudence becomes like a house without a roof – it is no longer properly a house.

The “subjective” parts are related to the cardinal virtue just as a species is related to a genus, e.g. how a lion and ox are related to ‘animal.’ They are properly “kinds” of the cardinal virtue. For example, justice that is due between private individuals (commutative justice) and justice that is for the whole community (distributive justice) are both subjective parts of justice.¹⁵⁸

The “potential” parts of a principal virtue are those which share something in common with the principal virtue but fall short of the perfection of that virtue.¹⁵⁹ They may be directed to “secondary acts or matters.”¹⁶⁰ They are “annexed” (*adjunguntur*) to the principal virtues.¹⁶¹ For example, Aquinas lists “good counsel” (which concerns counsel) and “gnome” (which concerns judgement in matters outside the law) as potential parts of prudence.¹⁶² This is because they are concerned with acts and matters different from the proper act and matter of prudence, which is to command¹⁶³ (*praecipere*) the application of right reason to one’s actions.¹⁶⁴ He

¹⁵⁵ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 48, a. 1.

¹⁵⁶ The eight integral parts of virtue are: memory (*memoria*), reasoning (*ratio*), understanding (*intellectus*), docility (*docilitas*), shrewdness (*solertia*), foresight (*providentia*), circumspection (*circumspectio*), and caution (*cautio*) (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 48, a. 1).

¹⁵⁷ Not memory itself as a brain function, but a virtue of remembering things as they really were. Pieper calls it “true-to-being memory” (Pieper 1965, 15).

¹⁵⁸ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 61, a. 1.

¹⁵⁹ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 80, a. 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 48, a. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 80, a. 1.

¹⁶² *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 48, a. 1.

¹⁶³ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 47, a. 8.

also lists “religion”¹⁶⁵ (worship of God) and “piety”¹⁶⁶ (reverence to one’s parents and country) as potential parts of justice.¹⁶⁷ They are potential parts because they fall short of that “equal due” necessary for justice, in the sense that one cannot completely give what is due to God and one cannot also equally return what one owes one’s parents (e.g. life itself). In these cases, the secondary virtue is similar enough to warrant a connection with the principal virtue but also falls short of the proper act and matter of that principal virtue. The precise details of the similarity and difference may vary from case to case.

The use of this tripartite distinction (integral, subjective, and potential) to classify “parts” of a principal virtue is a unique innovation of Aquinas (Kent 2013, 102).¹⁶⁸ Through this scheme, Aquinas was able to incorporate the virtues of other authors into his overall virtue ethics. For example, as “parts” of prudence alone he is able to assimilate three virtues from Cicero, six from Macrobius (following Plotinus), three from Aristotle, and ten from Andronicus.¹⁶⁹ It gives his virtue ethics an “assimilative” capacity.

As Yearley pointed out in his study of Aquinas and Mencius, it also allows for a degree of openness and flexibility when it comes to comparing Aquinas’ virtue ethics with other ethical systems. “The kind of analysis generated by the idea that virtues have parts also provides us with a model that, when revised, can be used for the comparative study of different lists of virtues” (Yearley 1990, 35). For one thing, one need not worry that the virtues in Aquinas are a closed or completed list. The virtues are fixed in terms of the principal virtues (faith, hope, love, prudence, justice, temperance, and courage), but it provides extra room for many more virtues to be incorporated as “parts” – especially as “potential parts.”

Given this, what I am going to attempt in this chapter, i.e. identify correspondences between some principal virtues in Aquinas and some Filipino virtues, is not at all forced or contrived. Rather, the internal structure of Aquinas’ virtue ethics *allows* for such a comparison. One is free to treat a Filipino virtue as a “potential” part of any one of Aquinas’ principal virtues so long as they both show a significant degree of similarity. The Filipino virtues would most likely be “potential” parts rather than “integral” or “special” parts because they obviously have a different

¹⁶⁴ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 47, a. 4; cf. a. 7.

¹⁶⁵ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 81.

¹⁶⁶ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 101.

¹⁶⁷ These two are in fact not taken from the Christian tradition but from a list by Cicero (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 80, a. 1, obj. 1).

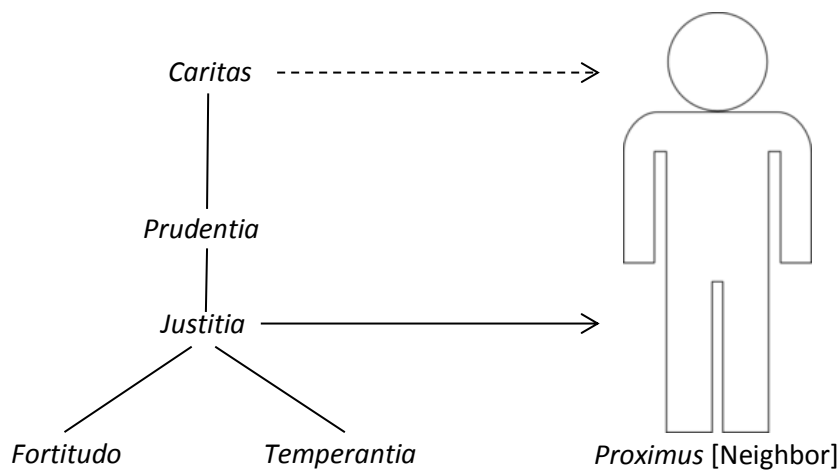
¹⁶⁸ Though the distinction itself comes from Albert the Great’s *De bono* (On good), Albert did not use it in the way that Aquinas does (cf. Kent 2013, 102).

¹⁶⁹ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 48, a. 1, obj. 1.

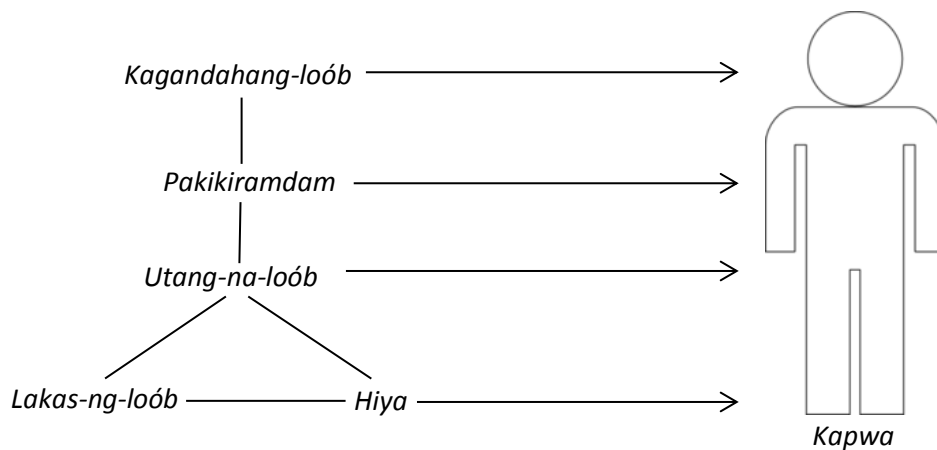
orientation and a different object,¹⁷⁰ the *kapwa*. *Kapwa* is a concept which Aquinas obviously did not deal with.

The notion of various “parts” of virtue will also be borrowed when it comes to subsuming some Filipino virtues under Filipino virtues. This will be applied especially for the virtue of *hiya* under which I intend to subsume some other Filipino virtues, namely, *amor proprio*, *pakikisama*, and “crab mentality” as “parts” (section 4.5.3).

The correspondence that I propose between the principal virtues in Aquinas and the Filipino virtues is as follows:



[Illustration 1. Five principal Thomist virtues]



[Illustration 2. The Filipino virtues]

¹⁷⁰ Aquinas explains that a virtue can differ from others on the basis of its object (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 54, a. 2). This object is not to be considered solely in terms of its matter but also in terms of its formal aspect (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 54, a. 2, ad 1; II-II, q. 47, a. 5). So for example, I may treat Joe as my neighbor (*proximum*) in terms of the principal virtue of justice, but I may also treat Joe as my *kapwa* in terms of a different Filipino virtue, for example, *utang-na-loób*.

In the above illustrations, I have chosen five Filipino virtues to serve as counterparts for five principal virtues in Aquinas. Each of these Filipino virtues exhibit similarities with their corresponding principal virtues as will be shown in each of their respective sections below. They are organized according to the pattern that is found in Aquinas: the theological virtue of love (*caritas*) is the most important virtue overall and is situated at the top; prudence (*prudentia*) is the most important cardinal virtue whose subject is reason; justice (*justitia*) is the cardinal virtue whose subject is the will; and temperance (*temperantia*) and courage/fortitude (*fortitudo*) are the cardinal virtues whose subject is the sensitive appetite (the concupiscible and irascible appetites respectively) (Illustration 1). I have chosen *kagandahang-loób* as the Filipino counterpart for love, *pakikiramdam* for prudence, *utang-na-loób* for justice, *hiya* for temperance, and *lakas-ng-loób* for courage/fortitude (Illustration 2). The five Filipino virtues are not randomly chosen. Besides being similar to the five principal virtues of Aquinas, they have been deemed worthy of academic scholarship and have a decent amount of literature written on them. For example, all of them are part of the list of Filipino values of Clemente et al. (2008, 3) which is in turn adapted from the list of Enriquez (1992, 93).

There are two reasons why counterparts to the principal (theological) virtues of faith (*fides*) and hope (*spes*) were not chosen for our list of Filipino virtues. First, the likely candidates, *pananampalataya* (faith) and *pag-asa* (hope), are not significantly different in meaning from their Western counterparts. They do not have any overt indigenous or relational characteristic as is the case with the other Filipino virtues. *Pananampalataya* and *pag-asa* have not received any special scholarly treatment in the field of Filipino values as being uniquely Filipino.¹⁷¹ Second, none of the Filipino virtues are theological virtues. Even when *caritas* is compared with *kagandahang-loób*, it will in fact be a non-theological aspect of *caritas*, called *benevolentia*, that will be put to the fore (in section 4.2.3). The decidedly “human” orientation of the Filipino virtues will be made obvious as the details of each Filipino virtue is discussed.

Though the correspondence is due to the similarities of the virtues, a general difference that I also wanted to show through the two illustrations is that for the Thomist virtues there is only one virtue that is properly towards the other person (*proximus* or *alter*). This virtue is justice (*justitia*).¹⁷² I used broken lines for love

¹⁷¹ Even Miranda in his work *Pagkamakatao: Reflections on the Theological Virtues in the Philippine Context* keeps the traditional theological virtues (faith, hope, and love) and only examines how they might be interpreted in the Philippine context (Miranda 1987). He does not propose indigenous counterparts for them.

¹⁷² “It is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others: because it denotes a kind of equality, as its very name implies; indeed we are wont to say that things are adjusted when they are made equal, for equality is in reference of one thing to some other. On the other hand the other virtues perfect man in those matters only which befit him in relation to himself (*Dicendum quod iustitiae proprium est inter alias virtutes ut ordinet hominem in his quae sunt ad alterum. Importat enim aequalitatem quandam, ut ipsum nomen demonstrat, dicuntur enim vulgariter ea quae adaequantur iustari. Aequalitas autem ad alterum est. Aliae autem virtutes perficiunt hominem solum in his quae ei conveniunt secundum seipsum*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1431).

(*caritas*) because Aquinas defines it as having God as its primary object and other people only secondarily¹⁷³ (Illustration 1). On the other hand, the Filipino virtues all have the *kapwa* as their primary object. This is my basis for calling Filipino virtue ethics a much more “relational” virtue ethics in comparison to other examples of virtue ethics, including that of Aquinas.

Nevertheless, the principal virtues of Aquinas provide a useful organizing principle for the Filipino virtues. They provide a pattern that can be used to make sense of the number of Filipino virtues and indicate what kind of interconnections there are between them. The way that Aquinas’ principal virtues work together can serve as a starting point or “clue” to explain how the Filipino virtues might also work together. Filipino scholars such as Jocano (1997) and Enriquez (1992, 93) have also attempted to schematize Filipino “values.” Unfortunately, both lack any deep philosophical justification for their schemes. Aquinas, on the other hand, organizes his virtues not only in accordance with the virtues of the Christian and Greek traditions but also based on a complex view of the soul.

Because *loób* is a holistic and relational will, it makes sense to begin our discussion with the Filipino virtues whose counterparts in Aquinas are also virtues of the will, namely, love (*caritas*) and justice (*justitia*).¹⁷⁴ I will present the pair of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* as the central dynamic, the “beating heart,” of the Filipino virtues. The former begets the latter and then returns back to its source. Afterwards, I will discuss the other Filipino virtues.

4.2 *Kagandahang-loób*

4.2.1 *Kagandahang-loób* actualizes the *kapwa*

Kagandahang-loób is literally translated as “beauty-of-will.” “Beauty” here should not mean an aesthetic kind of beauty but rather a moral beauty in how one treats the *kapwa*.¹⁷⁵ It is practically synonymous with another Filipino term *kabutihang-loób* or “goodness-of-will.”¹⁷⁶ For the sake of simplicity *kagandahang-loób* will be used to

¹⁷³ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 25, a. 1; q. 26, a. 2.

¹⁷⁴ “Two virtues are in the will as their subject: charity and justice (*Duae virtutes sunt in voluntate sicut in subiecto; scilicet caritas et iustitia*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 5, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 25).

¹⁷⁵ “Contemporary psychology has brought out strongly the point that a person is defined by his relationship to others. In lowland Philippines, this can be done by describing what sort of *loob* he has. A person, for instance, is said to be of “*magandang-loob*” [of beautiful *loób*; *magandang-loób* is the adjective form of the noun *kagandahang-loób*] or alternatively, of “*mabuting-loob*” [of good *loób*; *mabuting-loób* is the adjective form of the noun *kabutihang-loób* (goodness-of-will)] because he generally relates well and positively with others” (de Mesa 1987, 45).

¹⁷⁶ “An interesting note about [*kabutihang-loób* (goodness-of-will)] is how it is easily exchanged in ordinary usage with *kagandahang-loob*. Because both *mabuti* [good] and *maganda* [beautiful] clearly see *loob* as positive and well-meaning, it is not unreasonable to suppose, with many others, that what applies to one also

account for *kabutihang-loób*. This is perhaps the single most important virtue in Filipino virtue ethics since this is where everything begins. As Miranda says, “*kabutihang-loob* and *kagandahang-loob* may be considered as the root paradigms of the culture. They express our deepest and most basic assumptions about social co-existence” (Miranda 1992, 121).

In many ways *kagandahang-loob* is the quintessential Filipino value. In fact, if forced to point among the several values as the most indigenous I would probably point to this as distinctive—distinctive of the culture, i.e., the others remain important and central, but *kagandahang-loob* is something a Filipino cannot not have and continue to be recognizable to *kapwa-Pilipino* [fellow Filipinos] as Pinoy [popular slang for Filipino/Pilipino]. (Miranda 1992, 182)

Enriquez describes *kagandahang-loób* in this way:

The concept [*kagandahang-loób*] is manifested through an act of generosity or *kabutihan*. Thus, one sees *kagandahang-loób* in the act of lending utensils to neighbors or graciously accommodating a guest. But to qualify as *kagandahang-loób*, such acts of generosity must spring spontaneously from the person’s goodness of heart or *kabaitan*. A display of *kagandahang-loób* must have no motive save that of kindness and inherent graciousness.¹⁷⁷ (Enriquez 1992, 57)

Consider the act of giving money to someone whose father is in the hospital and cannot pay the bills; or buying a meal for a beggar sleeping on a sidewalk; or making an extra effort to help an unemployed friend find a job in the company one is working in. These are all examples of *kagandahang-loób*, but it is not only the act that counts, but also the motivation. The act of kindness must not be guided by an ulterior motive to receive a reward. As de Castro explains:

An act can be considered to convey *kagandahang loób* only if it is done out of *kusang loób* (roughly, free will); and can only be considered to have been done out of *kusang loób* if the agent (1) is not acting under external compulsion, (2) is motivated by positive feelings (e.g. charity, love or sympathy) towards the beneficiary, and (3) is not motivated by the anticipation of reward. These conditions entail debt-of-goodwill relationships where the benefactor has no right to demand reciprocity but the beneficiary has a “self-imposed” obligation to repay *kagandahang loób* with *kagandahang loób*. (de Castro 1998)

From the way that de Castro explains it, *kagandahang-loób* sounds like an altruism driven by feelings of sympathy and concern. It must be self-initiated, without any ulterior expectation of reward, and must be driven by genuine love and care for the other person. It is certainly very different from the duty that is found in Kant.

applies to the other” (Miranda 1992, 159). Miranda eventually tries to introduce distinctions between the two, but for our purposes it is simpler and more practical to just see both as synonymous.

¹⁷⁷ “As the culture understands it, *kagandahang-loob* includes both *kabutihan* [and] *kabaitan*” (Miranda 1992, 81).

An agent who is motivated purely by a sense of duty does not act out of *kusang loob* [free will, voluntariness]. **He must be motivated by genuine feelings for the beneficiaries of his actions.** Thus there is a sharp contrast with the Kantian concept of duty and moral worth. For the agent needs to be motivated by such emotions as pity, sympathy, love, and charity. **There can be no *kagandahang loob* if a person performs his duties without positive emotional involvement.** (de Castro 1998; emphasis mine)

What will in fact be noticed in the virtue of *kagandahang-loób* and other Filipino virtues is that the “emotions,” or what Aquinas calls “passions,” plays a prominent and integrated part in the functioning of the virtue. Certainly the emotions play a much more obvious role than reason, which is very much subdued in the background. De Castro also points out that the presence of the virtue counts for much more than the benefits that the other person receives.

It is not sufficient that they [actions] bear benefits, whether actually or potentially. In the reckoning of moral worth, the actual benefits may not even be necessary at all. It is the *kagandahang loob* attending the deed that carries the greatest weight. (de Castro 2000, 53)

It is not to say that “it is the thought that counts” or “it is simply the deed that counts;” but rather, “it is the virtue that is accompanied by a deed that counts” since one cannot have a virtue without action. Neither is the virtue to be judged by the consequences of the action. An act of *kagandahang-loób*, with its sincerity and “positive emotional involvement” which results in only minor benefit to the recipient, counts for much more in the perspective of Filipino virtue ethics than an act of impersonal and emotionless duty that has greater benefit. The idea behind this is that *kagandahang-loób* has an aspect of human relationship that duty may lack. Whether the benefit is big or small, the presence of *kagandahang-loób* is more important because it actualizes the other as *kapwa* and thereby starts and sustains the whole process of relating with the other person through the Filipino virtues. The scale of the action is not as important as the fact that the other is transformed into a *kapwa* and treated as such. *Kagandahang-loób*, especially in the most initial stages, is responsible for the actualization and transformation of the other into a real life *kapwa*. In the words of Alejo, *kagandahang-loób* not only gives an object to another person but at the same time “welcomes” the other person.

Who do we consider to have *kagandahang-loób*? He or she who gives, with “open hands.” For *kagandahang-loób* is to stretch the arms and simultaneously open the hands not only to offer whatever one is holding but to also receive the beneficiary. Who is generous? The one who knows how to receive those who ask. The one asking receives the object asked for; however, the one asking is welcomed in by the person who has *kagandahang-loób*.¹⁷⁸ (Alejo 1990, 111; translation mine)

¹⁷⁸ “Sino ba ang tinatagurian nating may magandang-loob? Siyang mapagbigay, “bukas-palad”. Sapagkat ang *kagandahang-loob* ay ang pag-unat ng bisig at sabay na pagbubukas ng palad upang hindi lamang maghandog ng kung anuman ang hawak kundi upang tumanggap sa pinaghahandugan. Sino ang

Kagandahang-loób is not just about a transfer of material goods or services, but a transformation—in this case called “welcoming”—of the other person as a *kapwa*. Miranda, in a more generalized fashion, calls this an “outflow of goodness” which either affirms or defends the other as human:

One is the outflow of goodness, a reaching out from humanity to humanity, a completion of one’s humanity. It is the altruism of humanity in the sense of solidarity in good, **appreciating and valuing the other as *kapwa*, affirming and applauding the other as human**. It looks at the other and admires the other as good. The other outflow is... the sensitivity to those who suffer and are in pain. They too, despite appearances, are human. They too are waiting to be affirmed as human. This altruism restores, defends, protects the human. (Miranda 1992, 181; emphasis mine)

It must be remembered that *kagandahang-loób* is not an individual virtue but a *relational* virtue. It sparks and sustains a healthy and harmonious relationship between persons. “There must be a relationship with another. To convey *kagandahang loob* is to give part of oneself for the benefit of others” (de Castro 2000, 53). De Mesa concurs with this when he says: “*kagandahang-loob* is, by its very nature, a positively relational concept” (de Mesa 1987, 40) and also, “*kagandahang-loob* also connotes other-directedness. One can never be said to have it if he were not concerned with the well-being of others” (de Mesa 1987, 50).

Kagandahang-loób is also a hybrid concept. The Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition emphasized the survival of the tribe and the connection of all things. People are only expected to help one’s family or clan member by default. There need not be any reasons for helping beyond the fact that they are part of the clan, family, or tribe. They do not ask what they will get in return when they help their fellow sibling or cousin who is in need—they instinctually do it. The assumption is that they need to survive and flourish together as a clan or tribe or not at all, and this is a sufficient logic on its own. “*Kapwa* and *kagandahang loob* endorse the deeper experiences of mankind, akin to an ancient animist connectedness of feeling one with all creation” (de Guia 2005, 173). The Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition certainly serves as an undercurrent for the concept. But this original attitude was also expanded by the Spanish Catholic tradition. The command to love one’s neighbor became the command to treat anyone as family and tribe and to be genuinely concerned with their welfare and survival as one would be concerned for a family member. And so one can now *transform* the other, who may begin as a complete stranger, into a *kapwa*.

The opposite of *kagandahang-loób* is *masamang-loób*. “If a person is described as “*masamang-loob*” [of bad *loob*] it means that he is a person of a bad character because he relates negatively with others (de Mesa 1987, 45). This is usually

mapagbigay? Siyang marunong tumanggap sa mga humihingi. Ang tinatanggap ng humihingi ay iyang bagay na kanyang hinihingi; samantala, siya mismong humihingi ang pinapatuloy ng nagmamagandang-loob” (Alejo 1990, 111).

someone who does the reverse of giving gifts or doing acts of kindness to others, someone who steals or exploits others for selfish gain. Criminals are often called “*masasamang-loób*” (people with bad *loób*). It connotes inward and selfish concern. Someone with *kagandahang-loób* is like a star that shines light outward; someone with *masamang-loób* is like a black hole (a vacuum) that sucks light into itself.

One who has no *kagandahang-loob* is judged by the culture as *masamang tao*... Such a person does not recognize its presence; he is incapable of responding to it in kind; he is unwilling to become its source; in him the renewability of *kagandahang-loob* dies. (Miranda 1992, 186)

Someone who is *masamang-loób* cannot even enter into Filipino virtue ethics. Not only is he not able to initiate with *kagandahang-loób*, he is also not able to respond properly when *kagandahang-loób* is shown to him, meaning he will not have *utang-na-loób* which is the appropriate response to *kagandahang-loób*. Someone who is *masamang-loób* does not know how to transform the other person as *kapwa*.

4.2.2 The mother as the source and inspiration

Kagandahang-loób at first might seem just like any act of kindness or altruism. But it is not just any kind of altruism but one with groundings in a tribal and familial context. I suggest that the main source and inspiration of *kagandahang-loób* within the family is the mother’s love for her child. The mother loves and protects her child for no other reason except that he or she is her child.

Maternal love is unconditional, or gratuitous. The mother loves her child as her creature. It has not done anything to merit this love; in fact, there is nothing that the child can do to obtain this love. All that it can “do” is to be, to be her child. (Miranda 1987, 72)

Noddings, who had a feminine care ethics that was similar to Filipino virtue ethics, talks about the almost un-thinking attitude of a mother caring for one’s children:

Our relation to our children is not governed first by the ethical but by natural caring. We love not because we are required to love but because our natural relatedness gives natural birth to love. (Noddings 1984, 43)

It is also, especially at the earliest stages, a complete and one-sided giving. In its purest form it does not really ask anything in return. The intensity of love can also reach sacrificial proportions. If need be the mother is willing to sacrifice her own life for the sake of her child.

Nowhere as here do we find the inequality of love; love flows in a unilateral direction; one cannot speak even analogously of a mutuality of love. This altruistic character of maternal love has been repeatedly underlined; in fact, it has been universally considered as the highest form of love. (Miranda 1987, 71-72)

The new-born infant needs the mother in order to survive. The infant is completely needy and helpless. Without this other person, either the mother or at least a mother-figure, the child would never be able to reach his or her full potential as a person. Bulatao describes the Filipino mother as someone who “tends to create and maintain a situation where the child remains an extension of her self rather than as a being, independent in his own right. She tends to identify with her child rather than to look on him as ‘other’” (Bulatao 1964, 436). This is one of those subtle areas where the Western notion of individualism has not yet been fully absorbed. Whereas motherhood in the West may have already developed into the task of making the child completely independent (and likewise the mother independent of the child), the traditional Filipino mother would not mind mutual dependence even until the end of her life.

The societal admonition to have *kagandahang-loób* assumes that people have the internal ability to show *kagandahang-loób* because they have been shown *kagandahang-loób* at one point in their lives simply by having mothers (otherwise they would not exist). Of course, it is much more difficult if one has lost one’s mother prematurely, or worse, if one has been deliberately abandoned by one’s mother. The mother is the one expected to show the most pure and idealized form of *kagandahang-loób*; if the mother is willing to reject her child, how can the child even expect better of others? Perhaps here one already notices the close tie between the integrity of the family and the vitality of the Filipino virtues. The idea of legalized abortion, with its emphasis on the individual rights of the mother to choose to destroy her own child, is a gross violation of *kagandahang-loób*. Indeed, at the moment abortion is not yet legalized in the Philippines due to religious and cultural resistance, and this is all in keeping with Filipino virtue ethics. What is most crucial for *kagandahang-loób* is a mother, or at least a mother-figure, who is altruistic and sacrificial and who is able to teach her child this “maternal love” when dealing with others.

Maternal love means to insure that the child’s love also becomes “maternal.” It means to give him the love for life not only in the appreciative but also the benevolent sense. It means to develop the love of the child so that it becomes itself a source of life. (Miranda 1987, 72)

The most immediate place to practice “maternal love” is towards one’s siblings. In a culture that used to have families with seven children or more, this would have afforded a lot of practice. After the siblings there are also the cousins and relatives, plus ritual kinships such as the in-laws. One still common practice of *kagandahang-loób* is when the eldest sibling postpones marriage and starting a family in order to financially support his younger siblings through college. Another common manifestation is the sacrifice of the overseas Filipino worker (OFW), either a parent or one of the children, who works in a foreign country in order to financially provide for the family back in the Philippines.

As Guthrie has noted, “family relationships provide the model which many Filipinos follow in as many of their non-family encounters as possible” (Guthrie 1968, 57). If maternal love has been experienced from the mother in the family, and then practiced towards siblings and relatives, then there is a greater likelihood that the person will adopt this pattern towards those outside the family.

Kagandahang-loób is most manifest when other people are in a situation of grave weakness or need. Disasters, terminal illness, or extreme poverty provoke the showing of *kagandahang-loób*. The situation is analogous to newborn children who are also in desperate need. Of course, even when they become adults and less dependent on their mother, they are still the recipient of generous acts of love and kindness though no longer as a matter of life and death. And so *kagandahang-loób* manifests itself in various other minor gifts and services, like “the act of lending utensils to neighbors or graciously accommodating a guest” (Enriquez 1992, 57).

Because of the “maternal” element, it is not surprising that de Castro has called *kagandahang-loób* a “feminine” concept and identified similarities between it and Nodding’s feminist ethics of care (de Castro 2000).¹⁷⁹ But de Castro is correct in warning that one should not reduce *kagandahang-loób* to a mere subclass of feminist thought, and I agree with this because as I have stressed, Filipino virtue ethics was born in a unique cultural and historical context and is properly understood only through that context. It is not so much a reaction to a dominant patriarchal tradition as a continuation of the older Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition which just so happens to give mothers a privileged place. Filipino society cannot be said to be “patriarchal” in the same way as the immediate society of the American feminists. Even in the religious sphere, whose influence cannot be underestimated in the Filipino context, it is no coincidence that “Filipino spirituality is eminently Marian” (Cruz 1999).¹⁸⁰ Filipinos are famous for their intense Marian devotion, since it is a devotion to the Mother of God.

A characteristic of the Filipino Catholic, female and male, is devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. It is interesting how this aspect of Catholic life has taken such strong root in this culture. Can’t it be because of the central place the mother holds in the Filipino family, which she has held even from pre-Hispanic times? In Filipino Catholicism there is a feeling that one can approach the mother at a time when one cannot approach the father. If grace builds on nature, devotion can be said to build on culture. (Bulatao 1992, 19)

If anything, *kagandahang-loób* would have much more to do with the Marian aspect of the Catholic religion than with a secular feminist revolt against a social

¹⁷⁹ What de Guia says about Filipino caring also sounds a lot like what feminist ethics espouses. “Habitual openness towards the Other, devoid of selfish intentions, results in unobtrusive caring. This attitude is characteristic of Filipino personhood. As with altruistic mother love, no strings are attached” (de Guia 2005, 300).

¹⁸⁰ “Our society, some have observed, is basically matriarchal, as shown for instance, by our excessive devotion to Mary rather than to Jesus” (Miranda-Feliciano 1990, 53).

patriarchy. So although there is a similar emphasis on the mother in Filipino virtue ethics and the feminist ethics of care (cf. section 3.2.3), their similarities cannot be stretched too far because of the difference in traditions. Nevertheless, the strong emphasis on familial relationship is an important aspect of Filipino virtue ethics and is something that makes it unique from other kinds of virtue ethics, Aquinas' ethics included.

4.2.3 *Kagandahang-loób* and Aquinas' charity and benevolence

Aquinas calls *caritas* the mother and root of all virtues.¹⁸¹ It is the beginning of all the other virtues, just as *kagandahang-loób* can be called the beginning of Filipino virtue ethics. From this it would be convenient to equate *kagandahang-loób* with *caritas*; however it is clear that in Aquinas *caritas* is a theological virtue, and a theological virtue is one that is infused in us by God and which also has God as its proper object.¹⁸² *Caritas* is first about loving God and then loving one's neighbor for God's sake.¹⁸³ Although it is clear that *kagandahang-loób* has a Christian element, insofar as it has been influenced by the Spanish Catholic tradition and the Gospel command to love one's neighbor, I do not think that it can be called a "theological" virtue in the same way that *caritas* is. For one thing, it is not perfectly clear that one can have *kagandahang-loób* directly towards God since God is not weak and needy and is superior to man. One would more usually use other Filipino words of love such as *pag-ibig* or *pagmamahal* (love) towards God. Though one can argue that one can show *kagandahang-loób* to God as the "suffering Christ"—the act of consoling God as it is found in saints like Mother Teresa—it is not normally used for *kagandahang-loób*. Instead, one can speak of God's *kagandahang-loób* towards us. De Mesa is noteworthy for trying to develop an indigenous theology that centers on concepts of *kagandahang-loób* as a suitable term for God's love towards man.¹⁸⁴ *Kagandahang-loób* is expected to be at least between equals and most of the time it is initiated by someone in a better position to someone in a lower or weaker position. This implies that *kagandahang-loób* is primarily towards other human beings, and only secondarily towards God, if at all.

Also, it cannot be clearly said that *kagandahang-loób* is an "infused" virtue. Insofar as it is anchored on the experience of family and tribe it seems more like a

¹⁸¹ *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 62, a. 4; II-II, q. 23, a. 8, ad 3. Also elsewhere: "Charity is the form, mover, and root of the virtues (*Caritas est forma virtutum, motor et radix*)" (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 2, a. 3, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 113); "Charity is said to be every virtue not essentially, but causally, or, in other words, because charity is the mother of all the virtues (*Caritas dicitur esse omnis virtus non essentialiter, sed causaliter, quia scilicet caritas est mater omnium virtutum*)" (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 5, a. 1, ad 8; Hause trans. 2010, 231).

¹⁸² *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 62, a. 1.

¹⁸³ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 25, a. 1.

¹⁸⁴ "Thus, to use *kagandahang-loob* to describe God's salvific activity for our sake is to emphasize that God in relating with us is always *kagandahang-loob* for us. He is wholly intent on our salvation, wholeness and well-being. Surely, John had something similar in mind when he wrote that 'God is Love' (1 John 4:16) for us" (de Mesa 1987, 50). He will also try to equate faith and *utang-na-loób* as the appropriate response of man. "Faith as *utang na loob* is an appropriate response to God's eminent *kagandahang-loob*" (de Mesa 1987, 38).

natural virtue that anyone can learn and practice. Of course this is a little complicated because part of it is tribal and the other part is Catholic, and it is this second part that contains the idea of an “infused” virtue. But the Spanish Catholic tradition will only call *kagandahang-loób* an infused virtue if it considers it a literal translation of *caritas*, which it does not. This points to the conclusion that *kagandahang-loób* is not the same as *caritas* and that it is not strictly speaking a theological virtue.

There is however a certain aspect of *caritas* that exhibits much more similarity to *kagandahang-loób*, that is *benevolentia*. Miranda manages to pin down this connection explicitly when he says, “*kagandahang-loob* would be *amor ut benevolentia* [love as benevolence]” (Miranda 1992, 180). The root of this is in the *eunoia* of Aristotle, which is to wish what is good for another. However it is not identical with friendship but only the preparation for it.

Goodwill [*eunoia*] would seem to be a feature of friendship, but still it is not friendship. For it arises even toward people we do not know, and without their noticing it, whereas friendship does not... Nor is it loving, since it lacks intensity and desire, which are implied by loving. Moreover, loving requires familiarity, but goodwill can also arise in a moment... Goodwill, then, would seem to be a beginning of friendship. (*Nicomachean Ethics* IX.5; Irwin trans. 1999, 143)

Kagandahang-loób certainly has similarities here in that it involves willing what is good for someone not as though he was a friend but as though he was tribe and family. It is significant that the Greek *eunoia* (literally “beautiful mind” or “well thinking”) was translated into Latin as *benevolentia* (from the words *bene* and *volentia*), and is commonly translated into English as “goodwill.” *Kagandahang-loób* basically also means a good or beautiful will.¹⁸⁵ There are certainly these obvious semantic connections between the concepts.

Aquinas accepts Aristotle’s main statement on *benevolentia*: “Goodwill [*benevolentia*] properly called is that act of the will by which we will good [*bonum*] to another person.”¹⁸⁶ For Aquinas *benevolentia* is not the same as the “passion”¹⁸⁷ of love or desire (*amor concupiscentiae*); neither is it the virtue of charity (*caritas*). It is something in between, what he calls *amor amicitiae*, a term not found in Aristotle. It is the movement from self-love and the love of things (*amor concupiscentiae*) to the outward motion of charity (*caritas*). “*Amor amicitiae* is not friendship, that fully reciprocal relationship, but is rather the synonym of benevolence, that is, of good will, or wishing well to the other, or willing the other’s good for his own sake” (McEvoy 2002, 28). In other words it is still “one way,” it first needs to be reciprocated before it counts as true friendship (*amicitia*).

¹⁸⁵ De Castro directly translates *kagandahang-loób* as “goodwill” (de Castro 1998).

¹⁸⁶ “*Dicendum quod benevolentia proprie dicitur actus voluntatis quo alteri bonum volumus*” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 27, a. 2, *respondeo*; translation mine).

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Glossary in section 1.2.

Aquinas weaves together Aristotle and the Christian tradition in this area deftly—or perhaps precariously. Aristotle did not have the Christian concept of *caritas*. On the other hand Christianity did not speak so much about “goodwill.”¹⁸⁸ Both traditions contained friendship. What Aquinas did was to integrate everything into a gradual scheme that looks something like this:

<p><i>Amor concupiscentiae</i>¹⁸⁹ [Concupiscence]</p> <p>(<i>passio</i>) [Passion]</p>	<p><i>Amor amicitiae</i>¹⁹⁰ = <i>Benevolentia</i>¹⁹¹ [Benevolence]</p> <p>(<i>actus voluntatis</i>) [Act of the will]</p>	<p><i>Amicitia</i>¹⁹² [Friendship]</p> <p>(<i>mutua amatio / mutua benevolentia</i>)¹⁹³ [Mutual love/ Mutual benevolence]</p>	<p><i>Caritas</i> [Charity]</p> <p>(<i>amicitia quaedam hominis ad deum</i>)¹⁹⁴ [A certain friendship of man towards God] (<i>virtus</i>) [Virtue]</p>
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¹⁸⁸ The word *eunoia* is found only three times in the New Testament, in Matthew 5:25, 1 Corinthians 7:3, and Ephesians 6:7.

¹⁸⁹ “We have imperfect love of something when our love for it is not such that we will it to have what is good for its sake, but such that we will its good for our sake. Some call this ‘concupiscence.’ We have this sort of love, for instance, when we love wine, for we want to enjoy its sweetness, or when we love others for their usefulness to us or the pleasure we derive from them (*Imperfectus quidem amor alicuius rei est, quando aliquis rem aliquam amat non ut ei bonum in seipsa velit, sed ut bonum illius sibi velit; et hic nominatur a quibusdam concupiscentia, sicut cum amamus vinum, volentes eius dulcedine uti; vel cum amamus aliquem hominem propter nostram utilitatem vel delectationem*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 4, a. 3, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 215).

¹⁹⁰ “The second sort of love is perfect love, through which we love another’s good in itself (for instance, when out of love for someone I want him to have what is good, even if I get nothing out of it). We call this sort of love ‘love of friendship.’ Through it, we love others for their own sake (*Alius autem est amor perfectus, quo bonum alicuius in seipso diligitur, sicut cum amando aliquem, volo quod ipse bonum habeat, etiam si nihil inde mihi accedat; et hic dicitur esse amor amicitiae, quo aliquis secundum seipsum diligitur*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 4, a. 3, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 215).

¹⁹¹ “Goodwill properly called is that act of the will by which we will good to another person (*dicendum quod benevolentia proprie dicitur actus voluntatis quo alteri bonum volumus*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 27, a. 2, *respondeo*; translation mine).

¹⁹² “Strictly speaking, friendship is not a virtue, but a consequence of virtue. After all, it follows from the very fact that one is virtuous that one loves those who are like oneself (*Amicitia proprie non est virtus, sed consequens virtutem. Nam ex hoc ipso quod aliquis est virtuosus, sequitur quod diligat sibi similes*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 5, ad 5; Hause trans. 2010, 26). Aquinas means that a virtuous person will choose to be friends with similarly virtuous persons, and this will be reciprocated, but the virtue is not the friendship itself.

¹⁹³ “Yet neither does well-wishing [goodwill] suffice for friendship, for a certain mutual love is requisite, since friendship is between friend and friend: and this well-wishing [goodwill] is founded on some kind of communication (*Sed nec benevolentia sufficit ad rationem amicitiae, sed requiritur quaedam mutua amatio, quia amicus est amico amicus. Talis autem mutua benevolentia fundatur super aliqua communicatione*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 23, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1269).

¹⁹⁴ “Charity is the friendship of man for God (*Caritas amicitia quaedam est hominis ad Deum*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 23, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1269).

The innovation of Aquinas is using *amicitia* to connect all the various gradations of love, from *amor* to *caritas*.¹⁹⁵ “Aquinas makes a link between *amor* and *amicitia*, and, following that, between *amicitia* and *caritas*, in such a way as to interrelate *amor* and *caritas* by the mediation of *amicitia*” (McEvoy 2002, 20). However there is also a hidden innovation operating in the background. It is how Aquinas uses the notion of *ecstasis* to counterbalance the self-love of Aristotle.¹⁹⁶ For Aristotle self-love served as the starting point for friendship; we love our friends as extensions of ourselves. However, the pseudo-Dionysian *ecstasis* is a forgetfulness of self in order to be united with the beloved. According to Viktoria Deák this is what is at work in Aquinas’ *amor amicitiae*.

In *amor amicitiae*... the outgoing of the lover is absolute, since his/her desire transcends his/her own interests or gratification in the fact that it is directed to the other, to the friend; friendship-love generates a real going-out-of-himself in the loving person. (Deák 2014, 245)

Aquinas’ introduction of a pseudo-Dionysian element is an additional innovation that nuances his understanding of what *amor amicitiae* and *benevolentia* is all about. His *benevolentia* is thus different from that of Aristotle in this manner. The benevolence of Aquinas is summarized by Wojtyla this way:

Goodwill is quite free of self-interest, the traces of which are conspicuous in love as desire. *Goodwill is the same as selflessness* in love: not ‘I long for you as a good’ but ‘I long for your good’, ‘I long for that which is good for you’. The person of goodwill longs for this with no selfish ulterior motive, no personal consideration. (Wojtyla 1993a, 83)

This sounds very much like *kagandahang-loób*. However, if for Aquinas *benevolentia* is not the same virtue as charity (rather it is an “internal act”)¹⁹⁷ and neither is it a virtue in Aristotle, I suggest that *kagandahang-loób* is a kind of Filipino *benevolentia* that has been elevated to the status of a virtue. It is not just an “internal act” but a “habit.” The behavior of *kagandahang-loób* has more similarities with *benevolentia* than with *caritas*. This discrepancy is explainable by the different

¹⁹⁵ “Thomas is the first medieval theologian to bring the Aristotelian idea of friendship to bear on the speculative analysis of God’s charity” (Schockenhoff 2002, 246; cf. Fuchs 2013, 203).

¹⁹⁶ “Aristotle required that in friendship one extend to the friend the wish for the very same good which we desire for ourselves, ‘the friends being another self’. He insisted, on the other hand, that the love which the good man has for himself is the source and the model of the love he bears to his friend. The primacy of proper self-love is his starting point... If, however, there is in his thinking a tendency to place the philosopher’s self and the noble requirements of the philosophical life at the centre of reflection on the highest kind of friendship, then this risk is greatly reduced by Aquinas’ insistence on the ecstatic note which constitutes the disinterested nature of love and friendship... If the brief page containing the notion of ecstasy were to be removed then *amor amicitiae* would disappear with it, and only love motivated by desire would remain” (McEvoy 2002, 30-31).

¹⁹⁷ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 27 a. 2. Also, Aquinas says: “beneficence and goodwill differ only as external and internal act, since beneficence is the execution of goodwill... Goodwill is not a distinct virtue from charity (*Beneficentia et benevolentia non differunt nisi sicut actus exterior et interior, quia beneficentia est executio benevolentiae... Benevolentia non est alia virtus a caritate*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 31, a. 4, *sed contra*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1323).

goals of these ethical systems. For Aquinas, the goal is a supernatural one, eternal beatitude, and the principal virtues are those that contribute to that goal. On the other hand, since Filipino virtue ethics is concerned with a human unity (*pagkakaisa*) with the *kapwa*, it is not surprising if it considers as a virtue something which Aquinas only considers an “internal act.”¹⁹⁸ It is understandable if in Aquinas *benevolentia* is not a virtue but in Filipino virtue ethics it is, as *kagandahang-loób*.

But there is also another major difference between the *benevolentia* of Aristotle and Aquinas and the Filipino benevolence of *kagandahang-loób*. Aristotle and Aquinas have a clear conception about the division between reason and the passions and they associate *benevolentia* with reason.

The Philosopher, showing the difference between goodwill and the love which is a passion, says (Ethic. ix, 5) that goodwill does not imply impetuosity or desire, that is to say, has not an eager inclination, because it is **by the sole judgment of his reason** [*ex solo iudicio rationis*] that one man wishes another well.¹⁹⁹ (emphasis mine)

One cannot confidently say the same about *kagandahang-loób*, that it is *sed ex solo iudicio rationis* (by the sole judgment of reason) or that *non habet distensionem et appetitum* (it does not imply impetuosity or desire), because no distinction between *ratio* (reason) and *appetitus* (appetite) is implied in the Filipino concept of *loób*. It is a “holistic will” that contains all these elements. De Castro mentioned that *kagandahang-loób* required “positive feelings,” “genuine feelings,” “positive emotional involvement” and all these imply something of the passions being actively involved (de Castro 1998). In fact it seems that passions and emotions are a greater driving force than reason when it comes to *kagandahang-loób*. And so it must be said that though *kagandahang-loób* is a kind of Filipino benevolence, it is “holistic” in that it involves not just one faculty in man but the whole man, from his reason to his will to his passions.

To summarize the comparison, *kagandahang-loób* is more similar to Aquinas’ *benevolentia* than to his *caritas*, however the differences are that 1) it is elevated to the status of a principal virtue in Filipino virtue ethics, 2) it is not a theological virtue but a human virtue and 3) it does not only involve reason but the “holistic will” of *loób*, which contains the reason, will and passions. It is this last point which perhaps necessitates the outward showing of *kagandahang-loób*. Whereas the *benevolentia* of Aristotle and Aquinas can remain *in mente*, so to speak, *kagandahang-loób* is not genuine if it is not manifested and acted out towards the *kapwa*. As de Castro says:

¹⁹⁸ Aquinas also describes *benevolentia* as the beginning of friendship (*principium amicitiae*) insofar as it is included in the act of dilection (*dilectio*), which adds a “union of affections” (*unionem affectus*) to *benevolentia* (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 27, a. 2).

¹⁹⁹ “Philosophus, in IX Ethic., ostendens differentiam inter benevolentiam et amorem qui est passio, dicit quod benevolentia non habet distensionem et appetitum, idest aliquem impetum inclinationis, sed ex solo iudicio rationis homo vult bonum alicui” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 27, a. 2, respondeo; Fathers trans. 1947, 1306).

Kagandahang loob is meant to be “shown” to others. It is part of the meaning of *loob*—of what lies within—that it must be ventilated. The *kalooban* lies inside but it must not be kept inside. In a way, it is “what-lies-within-that-lives-without.” It can only be manifested and perceived externally. (de Castro 2000, 52)

This last point contributes to its elevation to a virtue in Filipino virtue ethics. The virtue of *kagandahang-loób* must be shown to others whereas the *benevolentia* of Aristotle and Aquinas can remain “hidden inside” as it were. Its criteria of action have to do with the holistic dynamics of the *loób*. But this outward showing of *kagandahang-loób* is important because it is what actualizes and transforms the other into a *kapwa* and initiates the *kapwa* relationship.

4.3 *Utang-na-loób*

Kagandahang-loób and *utang-na-loób* constitute the central dynamic or “beating heart” of Filipino virtue ethics. *Utang* means “debt,” and *utang-na-loób* means a “debt of will.” In the early days of research on Filipino “values,” *utang-na-loób* received the most attention from American scholars particularly because of how different it was from the usual understanding of “debt.”²⁰⁰ Francis Senden, a Belgian priest, described his first-hand experience of *utang-na-loob* in the Philippines:

Now this is a thing, as it is practiced here, that is unknown to us in Europe, and even in the United States. If I do something for one of you, you will do something back; and as long as you haven’t done something back, you feel an *utang*, you feel indebted – you want to pay off your debt. That is your *utang na loob*. And this is so strong that people keep on coming back to pay off their *utang*. There is one person who has come back already for the third time to pay off his *utang* to me. Because he feels indebted, he keeps coming back to bring me something... They bring you something, maybe a *polo barong* or a *barong Tagalog*, or they buy you the wrong brand of cigarettes, no matter what you smoke. But anyhow they want to show that they are grateful. It is very beautiful and you should never abandon this social custom. (Senden 1974, 48-49)

The experience of *kagandahang-loób* inspires the corresponding motion *utang-na-loób*. I call this the “central dynamic” or the “beating heart” of Filipino virtue ethics because the cycle of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* strengthens and affirms the *kapwa* relationship more than anything else. As Miranda says, “The mechanism most obviously related to *kagandahang-loob* is *utang na loob*... One who is truly *magandang-loob* deserves *utang na loob*” (Miranda 1992, 182).²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ See for example the pioneering studies of American scholars, Charles Kaut’s “Utang Na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation among Tagalogs” (1961) and Mary Holnsteiner’s “Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines” (1973).

²⁰¹ More elaborately Miranda says: “To be the object of *kagandahang-loob* is to have the unique opportunity and potential of being a subject in turn of *kagandahang-loob*. Having been once the object (*pinagkalooban*) one can then respond likewise (*magkasing-loob*). Furthermore, in the mutual exchange of graciousness the distinction between subject and object is obliterated, because both become subjects and objects

Utang-na-loób is the commensurate response of the *kapwa* who enters into a *kapwa* relationship. It is symmetrical to the *kagandahang-loób* in that it ought to possess the same qualities, such as its “altruistic” character. “*Utang na loob* to be value [sic] must be equally from the heart and freely donated. It is [*kagandahang-loob*] returning, and hence *not utang* [not a debt]” (Miranda 1992, 183). What Miranda means is that it is not a “debt” in the sense of a legal contract.

Consider this scenario: I lack money to pay my tuition for a semester in college. A friend hears about my situation and insists that he lend me money rather than I postpone my studies. I gratefully accept his offer. After several semesters I save enough money and repay him. However I do not consider my *utang-na-loób* to be fulfilled, since the money itself is not the *utang-na-loób*. Rather I am eagerly disposed to help him should any opportunity arise. Years later, as professionals, it does arrive. He loses his job and cannot find another one to support his big family. Being a manager in my own company I go the extra mile to secure him a good position while ‘pulling some strings’ along the way. He ends up with a better job than the one he lost. My *utang-na-loób* has translated into a significant *kagandahang-loób* for him, such that now—given the gravity of his predicament—the tables have turned and he is the one with an *utang-na-loób* towards me.

In this example, the *utang-na-loób* arose from an earlier *kagandahang-loób*. This interpretation is very different from early research on Filipino values that tended to investigate *utang-na-loób* on its own, without any reference to other concepts such as *kapwa* or *kagandahang-loób*. This then led to bewilderment as to why *utang-na-loób* works the way it does. *Utang-na-loób* must be situated within the larger system of Filipino virtue ethics and it must be properly paired with that which produces it.

It is [*kagandahang-loob*] which is the rationale, the justification, the motive or the reason for *utang na loob* and not vice-versa. In this sense it is not *utang na loob* which explains the dynamics and processes of cultural behavior as earlier believed. It is *kagandahang-loob*.²⁰² (Miranda 1992, 185)

Utang-na-loób is not simply about the object or service that is rendered, but it is primarily about the *kapwa* relationship. In the above example, even if it was not my friend who I knew personally but a complete stranger who extended the financial

contemporaneously (*nagmamagandang-kalooban*). Each humanizes the other through his graciousness. Therein lies the value and the ethnicity of *kagandahang-loob*. It does [not] leave the object in the state of object; it makes gratuity completely gratuitous, enabling the person to repay if and as one wants to. On the other hand, unless the object of *kagandahang-loob* repays the favor, one remains the object of *kagandahang-loob* rather than its subject. By returning *kagandahang-loob* the objectivity is cancelled, as is the *utang*. *Utang na loob* therefore is no degradation or humiliation by *kagandahang-loob*; in fact it is a dignification since one is given the occasion and possibility of responding in kind” (Miranda 1992, 185).

²⁰² Miranda makes a speculation about the linguistic origins of *utang na loob*. Though I do not agree with it as a fact, I agree with the spirit: “The culture must recover the original and indigenous form of *utang na loob*, which I suspect was *utang na (kagandahang) loob*. Somewhere in the course of our history that beautiful phrase was syncopated and its sense distorted, becoming only *utang na loob*” (Miranda 1992, 189).

assistance, the same thing would apply. *Kapwa* is broader than friendship in this regard. Also, it is not merely about the money. Paying back the money does not constitute nor fulfill the *utang-na-loób*. The *utang-na-loób* lasts even after the money was paid back. The goal of the *utang-na-loób* was not to repay the object itself but to repay the *kagandahang-loób* in order to confirm and strengthen the *kapwa* relationship. It is in this sense that *utang-na-loób* is much more than just a contract. As Kaut astutely observed,

Utang na loob cannot be treated in the same fashion as a commercial transaction (*utang*). It can be repaid only by means of something other than the activating gift and must involve manifestly *selfless* behavior on the part of the debtor. Since selfless actions *ipso facto* create *utang na loob*, the relationship becomes a never-ending one involving reciprocal gift giving and a constantly alternating state of indebtedness. (Kaut 1961, 260)

The “selfless” behavior is precisely *kagandahang-loób*. Though the gift itself may be “quantified” (I can tell exactly how much I owe the person who lent me money), the debt-of-will is not a fixed variable.

Since *utang na loób* invariably stems from a service rendered, even though a material gift may be involved, quantification is impossible. One cannot actually measure the repayment but can attempt to make it, nevertheless, either believing that it supersedes the original service in quality or acknowledging that the reciprocal payment is partial and requires further payment. Some services can never be repaid. Saving a person’s life would be one of these.²⁰³ (Holnsteiner 1973, 74)

Holnsteiner is correct that in *utang-na-loób* “quantification is impossible,” however she falters a bit when she uses the word “service.” “Service” is not the main thing here as much as the relationship between *loób* and *kapwa*. To have an *utang-na-loób* is to recognize that one has graciously received *kagandahang-loób* from another person, and then responding in kind. It is deliberately entering into the open door of a *kapwa* relationship. It is proving myself to be a *kapwa*. Another way of putting it, “what kind of man or woman would I be if I did not repay this other person?” I would show myself as someone who does not value this fundamental human relationship of reciprocal giving. In the tribal context where the survival and stability of the tribe depended on this very activity, denying *utang-na-loób* could endanger one’s very survival.

²⁰³ *Utang-na-loób* is possible even simultaneously with a money contract: “Giving credit is another area for the creation of *utang na loób*. Even though many instances of borrowing are ostensibly of a contractual or quasi-contractual nature, the borrower still feels a strong debt of gratitude to the lender *for making available the money at the time he needed it*. In cases where this is so, the borrower still acknowledges an inner debt, even if he has already paid off the principal and high interest rates, because a special service was rendered beyond a strictly contractual arrangement” (Holnsteiner 1973, 79).

Perhaps one of the key insights to understanding *utang-na-loób* is that it is “self-imposed,” as de Castro puts it (de Castro 1998)²⁰⁴ or as Miranda says, “self-binding.” “*Utang na loob* is not merely autonomous in the sense of independent, but also in the sense of self-binding. This kind of debt is not per se imposed; it binds only to the extent that one allows himself to be thus bound” (Miranda 1987, 37).²⁰⁵

The initiating gift of *kagandahang-loób* is by itself “altruistic” and “non-obligatory.” If it is pure and genuine then it should come with no strings attached. The person who extends *kagandahang-loób* can reasonably hope that the recipient will value a *kapwa* relationship and have *utang-na-loób*, but it cannot be forced. It is up to the recipient to acknowledge *utang-na-loób*. Of course, there are “consequences” to not having *utang-na-loób*. One shows himself a person who does not value *kapwa* relationships and would be less likely to receive *kagandahang-loób* in the future (someone with *kagandahang-loób* would naturally prefer to give to those who are inclined to enter into a mutually beneficial relationship). He may receive rebukes from people in society. But these consequences still do not “force” a person to have *utang-na-loób*. One cannot appeal to the law or go to the courts because someone failed to show *utang-na-loób*. One cannot be imprisoned simply because of lacking *utang-na-loób*. In fact, as de Castro notes, *utang-na-loób* is not even like a promise.²⁰⁶ The obligation inherent in fulfilling a promise can be demanded by the person to whom the promise is made. But *utang-na-loób* does not make a promise to another person. It is, at best, a promise made to oneself.

As the Tagalog proverb puts it, “*Ang utang na loob ay hindi mababayaran ng salapi*” (a debt of volition cannot be repaid by money). Unlike ordinary debts where stipulations are made, *utang na loob* makes no condition. If X saves Y’s life from drowning, Y has an everlasting ‘debt of volition’ to X. X does not give any terms. But out of his own will (*kusang loob*) Y tries to show his goodness to X whenever he can and at his own discretion. *Loob* becomes an interior law which tells Y to behave generously and amiably to X even for a lifetime. (Mercado 1976, 65)

²⁰⁴ De Castro also recognizes the important role of *kagandahang-loób*: “He [the recipient] owes it to nobody but himself to reciprocate with another *kagandahang loob*. It is only he who can compel himself to generate *kagandahang loob* without violating the requirement for the absence of external compulsion” (de Castro 1998).

²⁰⁵ “*Hindi maaaring ipatupad ang utang na loob nang sapilitan. Hindi ito maaaring singilin ng pinagkakautangan at hindi ito maaaring ipatupad ng lipunan. Kailangan itong bayaran subalit ang pangangailangan ay dapat makita ng nagbabayad na nagmumula sa kanyang sarili. Ang hinihingi ay personal at panloob na udyok sa halip na impersonal, panlabas, at obhektibong batayan* (One cannot require the *utang-na-loób* by force. It cannot be demanded by the benefactor and it cannot be required by society. It needs to be repaid but the need must be seen by the payer as coming from his own self. What is being asked is a personal and inward motivation rather than an impersonal, outward, or objective standard)” (de Castro 1995, 18-19a; translation mine).

²⁰⁶ “*Dapat makita na ang etika ng utang na loob ay naiiba sa etika ng mga pangako at iba pang katungkulan. Gaya ng naipaliwanag na, pati ang ideya ng obligasyon na nakapaloob dito ay naiiba* (It must be seen that the ethics of *utang-na-loób* is different from the ethics of promises and other obligations. As has been shown, even the idea of obligation within it is different)” (de Castro 1995a, 19; translation mine).

In the end, *utang-na-loób* is about virtue and relationship. It is about deciding what kind of person one will be when it comes to relationships. Will one choose to become a genuine *kapwa* to others? What is at stake is not simply the object that is passed around or the service that is rendered, but rather the fact that “the lender [in *kagandahang-loób*] is giving part of himself. He conveys good will. Thus, this is what he is owed” (de Castro 1998). To have *utang-na-loób* is to have a commitment to repaying this “giving of self” by also repaying with one’s self. “The recipient of good will must be ready to give of himself in return when the opportunity arises” (de Castro 1998). Or as Miranda puts it: “The debt goes beyond the legal-juridical framework; it creates an extra-legal but even more binding debt because it involves a personal debt, one that can only be paid back not only in person but with one’s person” (Miranda 1987, 37). This giving of oneself, if it is truly a giving of oneself, must not be externally coerced but a matter of personal commitment.

This is personal because first of all, the recognition itself of *utang-na-loób* is a personal step. There is no objective or exact measure in order to say that the help or favor that was received by someone in need is enough in value to be considered *utang-na-loób*. This acknowledgement depends on the personal acceptance of the importance and meaning of the action for the one helped. Even if there are social standards that can help in the evaluation, the final decision is with the individual.²⁰⁷ (de Castro 1995a, 18; translation mine)

Because of the personal imposition of *utang-na-loób* it is understandable that there are no written rules about how and how much to pay back. It is informal in this regard.²⁰⁸ To determine just how much to pay back requires another virtue called *pakikiramdam* (see section 4.4), a virtue that is used to guess another person’s inner state and how to respond accordingly. Suffice it to say for now that the way one chooses to repay *utang-na-loób* shows what kind of *loób* a person has. One can be a “minimalist” for example, and choose to repay only up to what one considers is needed to reach equilibrium, or one may choose to try and exceed the perceived

²⁰⁷ “Ito ay personal sapagkat unang-una, ang pagkilala mismo sa utang na loob ay isang personal na hakbang. Walang obhektibo at eksaktong panukatan para masabing ang tulong o pabor na natanggap ng isang nangangailangan ay sapat na ang kahalagahan upang ito ay makilala bilang utang na loob. Ang pagkilalang ito ay nakasandal sa personal na pagtanggap ng importansya at kabuluhan ng ginagawa para sa tinulungan. Kahit na mayroong mga panlipunang batayan na nakatutulong sa pagtaya, nasa indibidwal ang ultimong pagpapasya” (de Castro 1995a, 18).

²⁰⁸ “Madaling makitang ang mga partikular na pagkakautang na loob ay nag-uumpisa sa paraang hindi pormal. Ang pagpapalitan ng tulong at pabor ay hindi nakapaloob sa isang pormal na transaksyon. Walang kasulatan na naglalaman ng kung ano ang dapat gawin ng nagkakautang bilang kabayaran. Walang kontrata tungkol sa kung ano ang maaaring asahan ng pinagkakautangan. Hindi malinaw kung papaano siya mababayaran. Walang batas o alituntunin na naglalapat ng multa o kaparusahan sa isang taong hindi tumatanaw ng utang na loob. Walang tanyag sa pagbabayad at tila walang hangganan ang pagkakautang (It is easy to see that the particulars in the acquisition of *utang-na-loób* begin in a non-formal way. The exchanging of help and favor is not enclosed in a formal transaction. There is nothing written that contains what must be done by the one in debt to serve as payment. There is no contract as to what the benefactor should hope for. It is not clear how he will be repaid. There is no law or regulation that lays down a fine or punishment on a person who does not observe *utang-na-loób*. There is no time limit for paying back and no limit to the duration of the debt)” (de Castro 1995a, 4; translation mine).

utang-na-loób as much as possible. This leads us to the “central dynamic” of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*.

The “central dynamic” of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* is that ideally there should be a cyclical, alternating and increasing movement between *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*, especially with a *kapwa* who is an equal (the *utang-na-loób* towards parents are a different story; see section 4.3.1 below). As in the early example about the college tuition, my initial experience of *utang-na-loób* made me more disposed not just to repay the *utang-na-loób* but also to “up the ante,” so to speak; to one day outdo the other in generosity.

It compels the recipient to show his gratitude properly by returning the favor *with interest* to be sure that he does not remain in the other’s debt. It is a true gift in this sense. It is also a kind of one-upmanship. (Holnsteiner 1973, 73)

There are in fact tribal prefigurations of this “payment with interest” as I will explain below (section 4.3.2). But for now we can imagine how an ideal dynamic would be like, such that favors are passed to and fro between the *loób* and *kapwa* in ever increasing intensity. This not only prolongs the relationship but “deepens” the level of relationship. “There arises a continuous bond with each other between the one who gave the debt and the one who received it”²⁰⁹ (de Castro 1995a, 20; translation mine). Indeed, the payment of *utang-na-loób* is different from the payment of any transaction in that it does not end matters as much as it disposes one to even more acts of giving and receiving in the future.

It is important to see that the payment of *utang-na-loób* is not a finished step. We will notice that the payment of an *utang-na-loób* does not end the interaction between the debtor and the indebted. It is not like the payment of debt in a bank that ends any obligation that the borrower might have incurred. This serves merely as a sign of a continuation of interaction of those involved in the exchange of good will. It suggests that the door is open for even greater acts of assistance between the parties.²¹⁰ (de Castro 1995a, 19-20; translation mine)

It may even reach the point where both parties are ready to commit the greatest act of self-giving, that of sacrificing one’s life for the other. “The *kapwa* relationship begins with acquaintance and leads to a greater oneness of *loób* and in fact if possible, to the offering of life for one another”²¹¹ (Alejo 1990, 8; translation mine). Given this, the dynamic between *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* can be

²⁰⁹ “Nagkakaroon ng tuloy-tuloy na pagkakatali sa isa’t-isa ang nagpautang at ang nagkautang” (de Castro 1995a, 20).

²¹⁰ “Mahalagang makita na ang pagbabayad ng utang na loob ay hindi isang tapos na hakbang. Mapapansin natin na ang pagbabayad ng isang utang na loob ay hindi tumatapos sa ugnayan ng nagkautang at ng pinagkakautangan. Hindi ito katulad ng pagbabayad sa utang sa bangko na tumatapos sa anumang obligasyon na maaaring nagkaroon ang nangutang. Ito ay nagsisilbing hudyat lamang ng patuloy na ugnayan na kinapapalooban ng pagpapalitan ng mga kabutihang loob. Ito ay nagpapahiwatig na bukas ang pintuan tungo sa higit pang pagtutulongan ng mga partido” (de Castro 1995a, 19-20).

²¹¹ “Ang pakikipagkapwa ay nagsisimula sa pakikilalanan at humahantong sa higit na malalim na pagkakaisang-loob at kung maaari pa, sa pag-aalayan ng buhay sa isa’t isa” (Alejo 1990, 8).

considered the central one because it is what draws the *loób* and the *kapwa* closest to each other in unity (*pagkakaisa*). It is like the magnetic force that draws together two opposite poles of a magnet. Jocano says that it “serves as a “psychological contract” which morally binds interacting persons to one another, thereby strengthening group solidarity” (Jocano 1997, 83).²¹² It is something that blurs individuality in favor of unity.²¹³ Reynaldo Iletto, describing the encounters of Felipe Salvador with peasants who sheltered him while he was on the run from the Americans, says:

The presence of the word *loób* points to something other than simple economic relationship between lender and debtor, giver and receiver. In Salvador’s idiom, the gift is a mode of strengthening the bonds about the *loób* of men. Begging and the acceptance of food, shelter and protective care create, not a subordinate-superordinate relationship, but a horizontal one akin to love. (Iletto 1979, 287)

A gift that is passed back and forth is the dynamic of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* and is all about “strengthening the bonds about the *loób* of men.”

Because *utang-na-loób* is so central to Filipino virtue ethics, one of the worst things to be called in Filipino society is “*walang utang-na-loób*” (without *utang-na-loób*). This especially applies when someone has been shown a significant amount of *kagandahang-loób* but neither acknowledges nor repays it. A child who has been brought up in comfort by his parents but who ends up neglecting them in their old age is *walang utang-na-loób*. Someone who has been given a job when he needed it, but who ends up stealing from their company is *walang utang-na-loób*. It is related to another derogative expression called *walang hiya* (without *hiya*)²¹⁴ (more in section 4.5).

The Tagalog seldom utters the phrase *utang na loob* in a light or flippant fashion. Its implications are too serious, especially if the reference is to a specific individual. One of the more frequent ways in which it is used is *walang utang na loob* meaning “without” (*wala*) *utang na loob*, usually implying that someone has acted in an extremely ungrateful fashion or has refused to honor an important obligation.²¹⁵ (Kaut 1961, 257)

²¹² Jocano says this specifically of *utang-na-loób*, but it is more properly said of the dynamic of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*. Related to this he also says: “We Filipinos are so preoccupied with *utang-na-loob*. Our preoccupation underscores the importance of reciprocity to group harmony and unity, just as the concept of independence dramatizes the Westerner’s preoccupation with individual freedom and liberty. Both emphases have their respective moral base” (Jocano 1997, 83).

²¹³ Miranda states this idea in terms of subject and object: “In the mutual exchange of graciousness the distinction between subject and object is obliterated, because both become subjects and objects contemporaneously” (Miranda 1992, 185).

²¹⁴ “Anybody without the sense of ‘debt of volition’ [*utang-na-loob*] is considered ‘shameless’ (*walang hiyâ*), an expression which most Filipinos resent” (Mercado 1976, 65).

²¹⁵ Miranda also says: “Filipinos do not want to be considered, even unjustifiably, as “*walang utang na loob*”. That would be equivalent to implying that a person has no sense of personal honor. This is probably one reason that Filipinos have also culturally instituted the “repeated refusal” before one finally relents and allows the loan to be pressed on oneself or permits the favor to be imposed on oneself” (Miranda 1987, 37).

To have no *utang-na-loób* is to evince a defect in one's personality. *Walang utang-na-loób*, in the terms of Aquinas, can be called a "vice." It is a bad quality of one's soul, or more specifically in this case, of the *loób*.

If he does not recognize *utang-na-loób*, he himself is injured. His character is not going to be complete... If one does not acknowledge *utang-na-loób*, it is said that he is shameful or he has no *utang-na-loób*. In short, his own character is being judged. It is not merely one of his actions that is noticed. It is not merely one of his actions that is called bad. He himself and his character is at stake.²¹⁶ (de Castro 1995a, 19-20; translation mine)

In Filipino virtue ethics, *utang-na-loób* is something that makes a human person complete, inasmuch as a person is defined by his relationships with others.

4.3.1 Children towards their parents

As mentioned previously, the source and paradigm of *kagandahang-loób* is the mother's love for her child. This is especially true because the child is in constant need and would not be able to survive without the mother's help. Because of this it is natural for the child's relationship to her mother, and in general to her parents, to be the standard pattern for *utang-na-loób*. "Because the mother has borne him, the child owes her a lifelong debt of gratitude" (Guthrie and Jacobs 1966, 101). The meaning of reciprocity is learned in this earliest and most basic of human relationships.²¹⁷ The mother and father have given their children their very existence, sacrificed for them, and fed and sheltered them into adulthood. The children are expected to acknowledge this and be grateful, and must strive to repay them in gratitude.

The greatest strength of *utang na loob* is manifested in the parent-child relationship. Life is an unsolicited gift and thus the basis of a debt which cannot be repaid. In later life the child must obey and care for his parents who have given him his very existence. Except in rare instances, there will remain throughout the life of the parent a unilateral debt relationship.²¹⁸ (Kaut 1961, 270)

²¹⁶ "Kung hindi siya kumilala ng utang na loob, ang napipinsala ay siya mismo. Hindi nagiging ganap ang kanyang pagkatao... Kung ang isang tao ay hindi tumatanaw ng utang na loob, sinasabing siya ay nakakahiya o siya ay walang utang na loob. Samakatwid, ang kanyang pagkatao ang hinuhusgahan. Hindi lamang isang kilos niya ang pinapansin. Hindi lamang isang kilos niya ang sinasabing masama. Siya mismo at ang kanyang pagkatao ang nakataya" (de Castro 1995a, 19-20).

²¹⁷ "Since the mother-child relation is the original unit of personal existence, the motivation of the child's behaviour must be reciprocal, even if this reciprocity is, to begin with, merely implicit" (MacMurray 1961, 62).

²¹⁸ "Birth, then, is in itself a gift from the parents which initiates *utang na loob* toward them. Further, subsequent care given by the mother and father to the child generates a specific kind of obligation on his part in later life. Older siblings or older children of the household and neighborhood who take charge of the child when he is old enough to move about under his own power (or is replaced in the mother's attention by another baby) also cement relationships of obligation which will be of prime importance in later life" (Kaut 1961, 270).

Holnsteiner recognizes the same thing:

Children are expected to be everlastingly grateful to their parents not only for all the latter have done for them in the process of raising them but more fundamentally for giving them life itself. The children should recognize, in particular, that their mother risked her life to enable each child to exist. Thus, a child's *utang na loób* to its parents is immeasurable and eternal. Nothing he can do during his lifetime can make up for what they have done for him.²¹⁹ (Holnsteiner 1973, 75-76)

Rafael also says:

One has an *utang na loob* to one's mother (and never the reverse) by virtue of having received from her the unexpected gift of life. It is assumed that one will never be able to repay this debt in full, but instead will make partial payments in the form of respect (*paggalang*)... [Children] are expected to serve their parents only after they have become adults. The child thus accumulates a burden of indebtedness, and even after one enters adulthood one never stops owing one's parent one's *loob*. (Rafael 1993, 128-129)

The key here is that the *utang-na-loób* of the child to his parents can never be fully repaid as long as the parents live. What this provides is a constant benchmark for *utang-na-loób* from within a family context. *Utang-na-loób* towards other people, towards *kapwa*, is supposed to be guided by this parental experience of *utang-na-loób*. Just as there is an ideal form of *kagandahang-loób* in the mother's relationship towards her child, there is also an ideal form of *utang-na-loób* based on the relationship of the child to his or her parents. Once again this shows how closely tied the Filipino virtues are to the integrity of the family.

Because of this, in Filipino society it is common for children to take care of their parents when they are old and infirm. To send them to a "home for the elderly" is considered a kind of negligence, and besides it is financially costly and not an option for many households. Grandparents tend to live with their children and grandchildren rather than live independently.

The only possible parallel to this *utang-na-loób* towards parents is if someone saves another person's life. The point is that one could not have survived without the *kagandahang-loób* of another. This is why the strongest manifestations of *utang-na-loób* is usually incurred in times of desperate need.

It is also a feature of debts of good will that they are incurred when the beneficiary is in acute need of the assistance given or favor granted. The debt could then be appreciated as one of good will because, by catering to another person's pressing need, the benefactor is able to express positive feelings towards the beneficiary. There

²¹⁹ Holnsteiner also says: "The parent-child *utang-na-loób* relationship is complementary rather than reciprocal. For parents never develop *utang na loób* toward their children. They have a duty to rear them which is complemented by the children's obligation to respect and obey their parents and show their gratitude by taking care of them in old age. The children's obligation to the parents continues even when the parents' duties have been largely fulfilled" (Holnsteiner 1973, 76).

is not only a giving of help. The act of helping serves as a vehicle for the expression of sympathy or concern. The benefactor is not only giving something that is external to him. In a manner of speaking, he is also able to give of himself (de Castro 1998).

4.3.2 Marcel Mauss and tribal gift exchange

Some scholars have compared *utang-na-loób* with gift-exchange in tribal societies studied by Marcel Mauss.²²⁰ I think there is something true in this comparison, but it must be qualified. There is certainly a connection to the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition that was the origin of *utang-na-loób*, but there are significant differences due to the development of the concept by the Spanish Catholic tradition.

Mauss was famous for describing the phenomenon of the *potlatch* found among the North-Western American Indians, a ritual of gift giving and exchange where natives try to outdo each other in generosity. According to Mauss, “in theory such gifts are voluntary but in fact they are given and repaid under obligation” (Mauss 1966, 1). What ensues is a long-term cycle of obligated giving and receiving between members of the tribe. Mauss argued that this phenomenon of the *potlatch* can also be found in other tribal societies especially in the *kula* of the Melanesians, which is “a kind of grand *potlatch*” (Mauss 1966, 20). Amongst the Melanesians the giving occurs not only inside the tribe but also between tribes represented by their chiefs. What is formed is an elaborate and extended network of gift giving that moves through several islands.

The activity of gift giving is not just about the physical gift. Gift giving is a completely separate phenomenon from barter, as Mauss points out. Gift giving in primitive societies involve a giving of one’s self, one’s spirit and life-power. Sometimes the personification is such that the gift takes a life and spirit of its own.

In Maori custom this bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons, since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person. Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself... One gives away what is in reality a part of one’s own nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone’s spiritual essence. (Mauss 1966, 10)

Because of this one must be very careful about whom he gives his gift to, since it binds one to the other person. “The objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them; the communion and alliance they establish are well-nigh indissoluble” (Mauss 1966, 31). There are severe repercussions for not repaying a gift. There is an entire system of magic and religion that provides the sanctions and punishments for those who do not abide by the rules. Amongst the tribes gift-giving can mean the difference between a long-term alliance or bloody warfare.

²²⁰ Both Kaut (1961) and Holnsteiner (1973) refer to Mauss in their pioneering articles on *utang-na-loób*.

Compare how similar the following description about the gift-giving of the Melanesian Trobrianders sounds with what has been discussed so far about *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*.

The first gift of the *vaygu'a* [exchange-gifts] has the name of *vaga*, opening gift. It definitely binds the recipient to make a return gift, the *yotile*, well translated by Malinowski as the 'clinching gift'. Another name for this is *kudu*, the tooth which bites, severs, and liberates. It is obligatory; it is expected and must be equivalent to the first gift. (Mauss 1966, 24)

Given how Mauss has shown gift-exchange as a worldwide phenomenon amongst tribal societies and how he (through the research of Bronisław Malinowski) has singled out the Melanesians as having one of the most elaborate systems, it is fairly reasonable to speculate that the pre-Hispanic Tagalogs themselves had a similar system of gift-exchange.²²¹ This was the origin of the *kaloób*—the gift which makes you one with the other person's *loób*—and of course, the *utang-na-loób* which obliges one to repay. The idea of repaying gifts with interest, or "one-upmanship"²²² as Holnsteiner calls it, can also be found in primitive tribes. "Normally the *potlatch* must be returned with interest like all other gifts" (Mauss 1966, 40). The idea of outdoing the other in generosity is connected to one's status and rank. It is a kind of show of power and wealth.

However, the introduction of Catholicism must have certainly changed the dynamics of gift-giving. Whereas the primitive system of repayment could require repayment of the gift through the threat of magic or warfare, such forced obligation was not permitted during Spanish rule. Also, the Spanish administration introduced the modern systems of credit and currency that was different from the native systems of barter and gift exchange. In other words, the dynamic of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* has something like the Melanesian gift-exchange as its Southeast Asian base but transformed by the Spanish Catholic tradition.

The Melanesian *kula* is a "ritual" with a more or less definite time and place and tacit rules guiding it. The dynamic of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób* is more spontaneous and is dictated, if anything, by the present need. Also, whereas in tribal societies gift-giving involved the accumulation of wealth and the determination of one's rank and status, the underlying motivation in *kagandahang-loób* is the Christian command to "love one's neighbor." *Kagandahang-loób* would contradict itself were it to force the other towards repayment. However, *kagandahang-loób* retains the animist idea of "giving oneself" and a connection between the gift and the giver. It also retains the tribal goal of strengthening bonds and relationships for the

²²¹ As Morais says, "*utang na loob* reciprocity has roots in pre-Hispanic value orientations and, like patron/clientage and ritual kinship, is related to a social class system which began before the Spanish arrived but was intensified over their 300-year regime" (Morais 1979, 47).

²²² "[*Utang-na-loób*] compels the recipient to show his gratitude properly by returning the favor *with interest* to be sure that he does not remain in the other's debt. It is a true gift in this sense. It is also a kind of one-upmanship" (Holnsteiner 1973, 73).

sake of survival. Thus we can see how the Southeast Asian tradition and the Spanish tradition have mixed together to produce something unique and distinct. Mauss' study is of particular importance in delineating the "raw" form of the Southeast Asian tradition, but for the Filipino context one must complete it with a knowledge of the Spanish Catholic tradition.

4.3.3 *Utang-na-loób* and Aquinas' justice

The most natural comparison to *utang-na-loób* would be justice (*justitia*). Justice has a special place in Thomist virtue ethics because it is the only virtue that is primarily directed to others. "It is proper to justice, as compared with the other virtues, to direct man in his relations with others... On the other hand the other virtues perfect man in those matters only which befit him in relation to himself."²²³ Aquinas talks about two kinds of justice, commutative justice and distributive justice. Commutative justice is that which transpires between individuals such as in commercial transactions and crime and recompense. Distributive justice involves the fair distribution of resources through the whole community. Commutative justice is particularly relevant to this dissertation.

For Aquinas, commutative justice is only about the "arithmetical mean" between individuals.²²⁴ If two people have 5, and one of them gives 1 to the other so that the other now has 6 and the other 4, justice will be done if the one who has 6 gives 1 to the one who has 4, so that the mean is restored.²²⁵ It is the logic of

²²³ "Dicendum quod iustitiae proprium est inter alias virtutes ut ordinet hominem in his quae sunt ad alterum... Aliae autem virtutes perficiunt hominem solum in his quae ei conveniunt secundum seipsum" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 1, respondeo; Fathers trans. 1947, 1431). Aquinas also says: "Justice, which orders us as regards others, does not concern our own passions, but the activities through which we interact with each other, such as buying, selling, and so on. Temperance and courage, in contrast, concern our own passions. So, just as there is in human beings one appetitive power that lacks passion (the will), but two that have passion (the concupiscible and irascible appetites), so there is a single cardinal virtue that orders us well as regards our neighbors, but two that order us well as regards ourselves (*Justitia, per quam ordinamur ad alterum, non est circa passiones proprias, sed circa operationes quibus communicamus cum aliis, sicut sunt emptio et venditio, et alia huiusmodi: temperantia autem et fortitudo sunt circa proprias passiones. Et ideo, sicut in homine est una vis appetitiva sine passione id est voluntas, duae autem cum passione, id est concupiscibilis et irascibilis: ita est una virtus cardinalis ordinans ad proximum, duae autem ordinantes hominem ad seipsum*)" (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 5, a. 1, ad 7; Hause trans. 2010, 231).

²²⁴ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 61, a. 2.

²²⁵ "In commutations something is paid to an individual on account of something of his that has been received, as may be seen chiefly in selling and buying, where the notion of commutation is found primarily. Hence it is necessary to equalize thing with thing, so that the one person should pay back to the other just so much as he has become richer out of that which belonged to the other. The result of this will be equality according to the "arithmetical mean" which is gauged according to equal excess in quantity. Thus 5 is the mean between 6 and 4, since it exceeds the latter and is exceeded by the former, by 1. Accordingly if, at the start, both persons have 5, and one of them receives 1 out of the other's belongings, the one that is the receiver, will have 6, and the other will be left with 4: and so there will be justice if both be brought back to the mean, 1 being taken from him that has 6, and given to him that has 4, for then both will have 5 which is the mean (*Sed in commutationibus redditur aliquid alicui singulari propter rem ejus quae accepta est, ut maxime patet in emptione et venditione, in quibus primo invenitur ratio commutationis. Et ideo oportet adaequare rem rei, ut quanto iste plus habet quam suum sit de eo quod est alterius, tantundem restituat ei cuius est. Et sic fit aequalitas secundum arithmetica medietatem, quae attenditur secundum parem quantitatis excessum, sicut*

commercial transactions such as buying and selling and crime and restitution. If I buy a product that costs 1 then I must pay something that costs 1. If someone steals from me an item that costs 1, he should be forced to pay back the 1 and also be correspondingly punished for the inconvenience.

It is clear that Aquinas is referring to a rational and objective criterion of justice that is different from *utang-na-loób*. Someone might lend me a certain amount of money to be repaid at a certain date, but even after that amount has been repaid the *utang-na-loób* may continue indefinitely. A sense of justice may inform the repayment of *utang-na-loób* but it does not exhaust it. This is why de Castro says that “debts of good will [*utang-na-loob*] are about some forms of justice. But we should not reduce all talk about debts of good will to talk about justice” (de Castro 1998). The primary goal of commutative justice is equilibrium in terms of goods and services between individuals. The primary goal of *utang-na-loób* is the strengthening of the relationship between *kapwa*, and this may exceed or build over commutative justice.

4.3.4 The exploitation of *utang-na-loób* in Philippine corruption

In a previous chapter, I talked about the three traditions of the Philippines in “confusion,” and the accusation of the Philippines being a “damaged culture” (section 2.3.3). I argued instead for seeing the Philippines as a “hybrid culture” still in the process of synthesis. One task for synthesis is to also discern how certain Filipino virtues become defective when implemented unchanged in a different context. For example, the virtue of *utang-na-loób*, which is a virtue when it comes to interpersonal human relationships, can cause problems when practiced in the context of a democratic government which requires objectivity and the absence of favoritism.

The conflict between formal justice²²⁶ and *utang-na-loób* is most acutely felt in the widespread government corruption in the Philippines. For many Filipinos *utang-na-loób* is of a higher priority than justice in a Western sense. *Utang-na-loób* is much older, tied to the older traditions, than the formal system of bureaucracy patterned from the Americans. In fact, there was no native Tagalog word for justice in the Western sense of it; it had to be coined. The present word *katarungan* was coined from the Cebuano word *tarong* which means “straight” (Diokno 1985, 273). Presumably the Tagalog word for “straight” (*tuwid*) could no longer be used because it was already used for the Tagalog term for “reason” or “excuse” (*katuwiran*). But the fact that a word needed to be coined for justice in the native language says

quinque est medium inter sex et quatuor, in unitate enim excedit et exceditur. Si ergo a principio uterque habeat quinque, et unus eorum accepit unum de eo quod est alterius, unus (scilicet accipiens) habebit sex, et alii relinquentur quatuor. Erit ergo justitia, si uterque reducatur ad medium, ut accipiat unum ab eo qui habet sex, et detur ei qui habet quatuor; sic enim uterque habebit quinque, quod est medium)” (Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 61, a. 2, respondeo; Fathers trans. 1947, 1453).

²²⁶ James Putzel for example considers as one minimum defining characteristic of democracy: “the rule of law exercised by an impartial judiciary, ensuring formal due process and equality” (Putzel 1999, 200).

something very important. The system of laws and government bureaucracy which are supposed to guide the implementation of justice is a foreign import.

Law in the Philippine case is a foreign body in an indigenous social life. It was a wholesale grafting of norms conceptualized in foreign communities, as exemplified in Philippine private law which was patterned after the Spanish Civil Code and Philippine public law which was copied from the American Constitutional framework. (Enriquez 1992, 60)

A constantly recurring question in Philippine society is, if the Philippines is the most “Christian” nation in Southeast Asia, how can it be that it is also one of the most corrupt countries? The answer is because of a clash of traditions. The American government system that the Philippines inherited requires efficiency, objectivity and impersonal professionalism, but the original emphasis of Filipino culture is on kinship and personal relationships. As Putzel says, “democracy in the Philippines remains shallow because of the still pervasive mismatch between formal political institutions and the informal institutions that govern behaviour and influence the standards of legitimacy” (Putzel 1999, 216). Add to this the complicating factors of poverty and economic dependency, then the net result is the proliferation of nepotism, cronyism, bribery and the use of personal contacts for illegal purposes.

This, I suggest, is one of the defining features of corruption in the Philippines. It is not only poverty per se, but a culture that is still in disarray and not yet properly synthesized. There is a constant frustration about how the dominant concern for clan and family has remained the first priority for politicians. “When a politician commits graft and corruption, he thinks that this is illegal but not immoral for after all it is not wrong to take care of one’s family while in a position of power” (Doherty 1974, 32). Political and economic power revolves around certain family dynasties and these dynasties outlast any change in government or attempts at reform, what McCoy has called an “anarchy of families” (McCoy 1994). The conflict between family-centeredness and the demands of justice and fairness especially in government is something that scholars have repeatedly identified. “While devotion to the family is good, the history of Philippine politics shows how the overvaluing of family relationships has led to corruption, cronyism, and injustice in the courts” (Bulatao 1992, 81).

Another expression of *kapwa*, as a relational value, is familism. This concept has to do with our concerns over the well-being of the members of our families or that of our kinsmen. As such, it is said to be another source of the ills plaguing our society, like graft and corruption... The current practice of nepotism in modern formal organizations, i.e., the government bureaucracy and private corporations. (Jocano 1997, 64-65)

Beyond the concern for the family, the next concern is those with whom people have established *kapwa* relationships with. It is not unusual for people to take advantage of “contacts” or “people they know” in the government for expedited

favors and services (cf. Simbulan 2005, 181-182). The personal relationship trumps the slow process of formalities. Indeed, in certain cases government functions have become so slow and inept that resorting to “personal relationship” in the form of a bribe is the only way to get any results. The bribe carries with it a perverted sense of *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*. It is “perverted” because even while it strengthens the personal relationship between a person and a government official, it also compromises the integrity of the government and thereby harms other *kapwa* on a widescale level. As Jocano says, “critics are partly right when they say that *utang-na-loob* spawns graft and corruption in the bureaucracy” (Jocano 1997, 82). Holnsteiner also says, “the line between bribery and reciprocal giving is a thin one, and it is easy for an official to rationalize bribery in terms of *utang-na-loób* payment” (Holnsteiner 1973, 79). When it comes to elections, the cultivation of loyalty to a certain candidate, regardless of the candidate’s integrity or moral standing, is often achieved by exploiting the *utang-na-loób* of others. In a sense their loyalties and votes can easily be bought through money or favors.

Political leaders, cognizant of the social system, exploit it by deliberately cultivating *utang-na-loób* debts toward themselves so that when voting time comes, they can reclaim these by requesting debtors to vote for them or for their candidate. In general, the debtor’s sense of honor and propriety forces him to comply regardless of the quality of the candidate involved in his party. (Holnsteiner 1973, 81)

Simbulan also says:

The politician, as a dispenser of favors or patronage, of course, collects during election time the *utang na loob* owed to him in the form of votes. Many of the politician’s relatives, if he is in a position of power, will most likely be in government positions, too... Within this complex system of relationships, the cultural norms of leader-follower and *utang na loob* (or the obligation to repay a favor received) operate. (Simbulan 2005, 184)

What is to be done then? Does this make *utang-na-loób* intrinsically negative? I would caution against hastily condemning *utang-na-loób* on the basis of how it is exploited or abused in government corruption. The potential of *utang-na-loób* for widespread good in terms of strong, personal relationships has not yet been reconciled with the idea of a democracy and nationhood or what Benedict Anderson calls an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). As I have indicated in the historical survey, one of the problems is the “narrowing” of *kapwa* relationships to only encompass one’s immediate family and a select circle of friends. What is required is an expansion of the sense of *kapwa* to encompass the country in general. This requires, amongst other things: a shift in general values education for the young, a synthesis of the three traditions especially in scholarly discourse, and committed individuals living out an educated example of Filipino virtue ethics.

A brief note may also be made about *utang-na-loób* as a control mechanism by a religious or economic power. For example, Rafael (1993) argues that the Spanish

combined the legalistic demands of religion and the feudal economy with an insistence on the *utang-na-loób* of the native. This would have made the control of the population (at least the Tagalog population) much easier. Kaut meanwhile talks about the collective *utang-na-loób* that was present between the Philippines and the United States.

Americans as a class of individuals are considered already to be indebted to all Filipinos and a part of the pan-Philippine obligatory networks—for did not the Philippines stand by the United States and individual Americans without being asked during the Second World War? Does not this mean that the United States and all Americans have *utang na loob* to the Philippines and all Filipinos? MacArthur's "return" was not enough—he was obligated to do that much. Therefore, Americans and Filipinos are not strangers but part of a "kinship" system. (Kaut 1961, 263)

This may have been the case when it came to World War II, but it was certainly not the case when it came to general economic factors. Joaquin has pointed out how the American government made the Philippine economy absolutely dependent on its products and imports (Joaquin 2004, 318; cf. Agoncillo 1990, 310-311; 374-376), a situation that remains until now. As Fallows also says in his assesment of the Philippine economic situation, "American rule seemed only to intensify the Filipino sense of dependence" (Fallows 1987).

I suggest that the connection between colonial authority (and exploitation) and *utang-na-loób* should be further explored. *Utang-na-loób* may have indeed been exploited on a collective level. However, one cannot begin to understand this kind of collective exploitation before one has understood how *utang-na-loób* works in an interpersonal level, and such is the focus of our study.

4.4 *Pakikiramdam*

4.4.1 Is *pakikiramdam* prudence or empathy?

Pakikiramdam is the closest counterpart to "prudence" in Filipino virtue ethics, however, since prudence is the cardinal virtue most bound to reason²²⁷ and reason is still subsumed in the *loób*, then it should not be surprising if *pakikiramdam* is the Filipino virtue that most "diverges" from its Thomistic counterparts. In the Aristotelian-Thomistic system, prudence is the virtue that enables one to find the "mean" or "middle way" according to right reason.²²⁸ The prudent person is able to find "a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency" (*Nicomachean*

²²⁷ "Prudence is essentially an intellectual virtue, but the matter it concerns is moral. And so, since it lies, so to speak, midway between the intellectual and moral virtues, it is sometimes classified along with the moral virtues (*Prudentia secundum essentiam suam intellectualis est, sed habet materiam moralem; et ideo quandoque cum moralibus numeratur, quodammodo media existens inter intellectuales et morales*)" (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 12, ad 14; Hause trans. 2010, 82).

²²⁸ *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 46, a. 7.

Ethics II.6; Irwin trans. 1999, 25).²²⁹ It involves a developed capacity to judge the mean for particular situations and concrete situations. “The role of prudence is to judge rightly about particular acts insofar as they are to be done in the here and now.”²³⁰

Pakikiramdam is also about being able to judge a “mean,” but it is a “mean” that has to do with *kapwa* and the relationship with the *kapwa*. It is a skill in: 1) properly gauging the other person’s inner state, 2) acting in accordance with the knowledge gleaned of the other person’s inner state in order to maintain harmony in the relationship, and 3) the perpetuation of a social sanction of indirect forms of communication in order to hone the skill of *pakikiramdam*.

Regarding the first point, *pakikiramdam* has been variously translated as “empathy,” “relational sensitivity” or “emotional intelligence,” but as Mataragnon says:

English-speaking people speak of related concepts such as empathy, sensitivity, discernment, subtlety, testing the waters/limits, sending out feelers, picking up vibes, sounding off, playing it by ear, etc. Not one of these terms, however, quite means the same thing or has the same connotations as *pakikiramdam*. (Mataragnon 1987, 472)

The insufficiency of “empathy” or “sensitivity” is that it only captures the first idea of *pakikiramdam*, that of guessing the other person’s inner state. The term empathy (*Einfühlung*) became important in scholarly discussions through the work of Theodor Lipps and some German phenomenologists.²³¹ Edith Stein defined empathy as “how human beings comprehend the psychic life of their fellows” (Stein 1989, 11). Their problem was a theoretical one. However, in Filipino virtue ethics the concern is not how empathy transpires—that one can empathize with another is taken for granted—but how one can do it well. *Pakikiramdam* is not a theoretical or epistemological concern but a practical concern. This is achieved through developing a high-sensitivity to non-verbal cues or indirect statements.

²²⁹ Aquinas also says that what is the “mean” may be different from one person to the next: “The mean of virtue is the mean of reason, not of the thing. This mean consists in the fitness or right measure that things or passions bear toward humans. This right measure undergoes diversification through the diversity of humans, since what is too little for one is a lot for another. And that is why we do not take what is virtuous in the same way for all humans (*Medium virtutis non est medium rei, sed rationis, ut dictum est. Et hoc quidem medium consistit in proportionem sive mensurationem rerum et passionum ad hominem. Quae quidem commensuratio diversificatur secundum diversos homines: quia aliquid est multum uni quod est parum alteri. Et ideo non eodem modo sumitur virtuosum in omnibus hominibus*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 13, ad 17; Hause trans. 2010, 94-95).

²³⁰ “*Ad prudentiam pertinet recte iudicare de singulis agibilibus, prout sint nunc agenda*” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 6, ad 1; Hause trans. 2010, 31).

²³¹ For a summary of the theories of empathy, see the articles of Dan Zahavi: “Empathy, Embodiment and Interpersonal Understanding: From Lipps to Schutz” (2010) and “Empathy and Other-Directed Intentionality” (2014). For Lipps empathy is a matter of first imitating the emotion of the other using one’s own past experiences (mimesis), and then projecting my emotions on to the other person (projection). For Scheler there is no need for mimesis or projection, but we can directly perceive and experience other minds. For Husserl and Stein, empathy is not an emotion but a distinct *sui generis* form of intentionality directed at the other person.

[Filipinos] have learned so thoroughly to be concerned with their own and others' feelings that they have worked out an elaborate set of protective procedures so that understanding can take place with minimum danger of hurting the other fellow's feelings... Filipinos develop great skills in observing others. They have an elaborate silent language by which they communicate their feelings: the tone of one's voice, the look in one's eyes, and the total expression on one's face. By watching these signs in others, the Filipino gains a sense of what others feel and reads the real meaning of the often metaphorical or ambiguous conversation that is taking place. In addition, they note the character of each other in minute detail, paying a great deal of attention to individual differences in personality, in the likes, temperament or disposition, and mood of the persons with whom they associate. Interpersonal vigilance is essential to skillful social relationships.²³² (Guthrie 1968, 59)

As Guthrie astutely observes, *pakikiramdam* involves reading non-verbal cues and gestures, such as the tone of voice and facial expressions. People do not want to state the truth directly, but to let things be “shown.” Why this process needs to take place has to do with the intimacy and unity in the relationship. In any case, “empathy” needs to be the first step in *pakikiramdam*. It is “a covert individual process by which a person tries to feel and understand the feelings and intentions of another” (Mataragnon 1987, 470). Mansukhani agrees with Mataragnon on this:

Pakikiramdam [is] a way of reconstructing another person's feeling state or state of being. Apart from being a mere sensitivity to nonverbal cues, *pakikiramdam* is also the active attempt to reconstruct the speaker's internal state. The sensitivity to cues, therefore, has as its goal the appreciation for, and the understanding of, the other person's state of being. It is an act akin to empathy. What is constructed in *pakikiramdam*, however, cannot be put into words.²³³ (Mansukhani 2005, 187-188)

As one respondent in Gastard-Conaco's empirical survey on *pakikiramdam* says:

Connected to *pakikiramdam* is the recognition that it is important for us to feel the other's feelings, that we have a shared identity, because whatever affects our feelings also affects theirs. (Gastardo-Conaco 2009, 314)

²³² “*Pakikiramdam* [is] the ability to sense nonverbal cues from others... *Pakikiramdam* simply refers to the ability to recognize the presence of such cues and to factor them into the understanding of the meaning of a speaker's utterances. It is these metalinguistic cues which guide listeners to detect hidden intentions, sarcasms, ironies, and various other connotations not present in the uttered words themselves. Those who are not sensitive to these cues have difficulty reading between the lines and often misunderstand a speaker's true intentions” (Mansukhani 2005, 187). Similarly according to Maggay, “*Ang pahiwatig ay nawawari sa pamamagitan ng pakikiramdam. Ito ang matalisik na pagsalat sa niloloob ng kinakausap ayon lamang sa pagdama at hindi sa tahasang pananalita. Kinakailangan ng matalas na pakikiramdam upang matanto ang bagay na ipinahihiwatig. Hindi umuubra ang pahiwatig kung ang kabilang panig ay walang pakiramdam o manhid, walang pandama sa ipinaaabot na mga paramdam* (The suggestion is noticed through *pakikiramdam*. This is the subtle sensing of the will of the speaker based merely on feeling and not on explicit speech. One needs sharp *pakikiramdam* in order to realize what is being suggested. Suggestion will not work if the other party does not have sensitivity or is numb, if he has no feeling for what is subtly conveyed)” (Maggay 2002, 57; translation mine).

²³³ Raj Mansukhani has credited this point to a personal interview with Roberto Mendoza, “a respectable psychologist who has deep familiarity and understanding of the intricate dynamics of *pakikiramdam*” (Mansukhani 2005, 194).

However, one mistake is to equate *pakikiramdam* with empathy and leave it at that. Empathy is just the first step when it comes to *pakikiramdam*. The second skill included in *pakikiramdam* involves a deftness in maneuvering and acting based on the information that is gleaned from empathy. This means that *pakikiramdam* is required to regulate the application of the other Filipino virtues in the same way that a thermostat is used to regulate heating. Mataragnon for example has explicitly connected *pakikiramdam* with other virtues such as *utang-na-loób* and *hiya* (Mataragnon 1987, 476, 480). Just as prudence according to Aquinas guides the application of the other moral virtues²³⁴, so *pakikiramdam* also guides the dynamics of the other Filipino virtues. I would, therefore, call *pakikiramdam* a “relational prudence.”

For example, in the dynamic between *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*, what should be done or how much should be given back in order to fulfill *utang-na-loób*? There is no way of precisely quantifying or calculating one’s *utang-na-loób*. One needs to *feel* or *guess* if the debt has been repaid, and this involves being sensitive to the other person, who has as much say as to whether the “repayment” has been enough. This requires the first step of empathy. If enough has been done then any further good deeds will no longer be considered *utang-na-loób* (though traces of it can still be there) but more of *kagandahang-loób*, meaning a free and spontaneous generosity.

Hiya (section 4.5) involves restraining one’s words and actions in order not to offend the other. In making a joke or a prank for example, one should know if it has gone “overboard” and ceased to be funny but instead hurtful to the other. This involves a sensitivity to the other person. If hurt is caused, the mistake made can immediately be compensated. Also, vices such as *masamang-loób*, *walang utang-na-loób* and *walang hiya* can be avoided through a well-developed *pakikiramdam*. One should be able to sense whether in the eyes of the other person, one is already starting to act like someone who is unvirtuous in these senses. In other words, *pakikiramdam* does not only involve reading the other person’s inner state, it also involves knowing how to adapt in light of that knowledge. As Maggay says, “Through *pakikiramdam*, we notice the intention of the hinting (*pahiwatig*) and gauge the corresponding weight of the negative information while maintaining the positive relationship”²³⁵ (Maggay 2002, 69; translation mine). Or for Mataragnon, “*Pakikiramdam* always involves tentative, exploratory, and improvisatory behavior. *Pakikiramdam* is a tracking and adjusting kind of response; what one senses and

²³⁴ “Both prudence and moral virtue have the same mean, but in prudence it is like a stamp, while in moral virtue it is like what is stamped (*Idem ergo est medium prudentiae et virtutis moralis; sed prudentiae est sicut imprimendis, virtutis moralis sicut impressi*)” (*Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus* q. 1, a. 13, *respondeo*; Hause trans. 2010, 91).

²³⁵ “*Sa pamamagitan ng pakikiramdam, natatanto natin ang nilalayon ng pahiwatig at natatantiya ang kaukulang bigat ng negatibong impormasyon habang pinananatili ang magandang pagsasamahan*” (Maggay 2002, 69).

feels at a given moment determines what is to be done next” (Mataragnon 1987, 471).²³⁶ It regulates the application of the other virtues based on the situation.

Finally, the third aspect of *pakikiramdam* is that it is not just individual but socially encouraged. “In a culture where indirect forms of communication are highly valued, direct forms of communication are held with suspicion. If I tell you exactly what I feel at the moment I feel it, I will be regarded as harsh, forward, and insensitive” (Mansukhani 2005, 193). Filipino culture, in general, favors indirect communication rather than direct and “straight-to-the-point” communication.²³⁷

Members of the Filipino culture not only try to gauge other’s feelings through *pakikiramdam*; they also expect that others be equally adept at this skill. For this reason, Filipinos do not feel the need to express themselves directly, and yet they expect others to know exactly what they feel. If the other does not sense what is not explicitly said, that is, if the other is unable to grasp my real intentions, then it is the other who is at fault. In this case, the other is accused of being *manhid*, or insensitive. One is therefore inclined to use euphemisms and drop hints, all the while expecting the other to “get it.” (Mansukhani 2005, 192-193)

Maggay also acknowledges that the repertoire of non-verbal gestures that are used for *pakikiramdam* and indirect communication (indirect enough to be both evasive and still understandable) is something that is learned from within the culture.

Of all forms of expression, the wiggle, rhythm, and movement of the different parts of the body are perhaps the most difficult to decipher the meaning. Deviating from language, it is not self-reflexive or easy to follow or respond to... The meaning of our movements and actions are embedded in culture and are not indicated by an orderly, simple, and written explanation. Its significance and grammar are learned through unconscious observation as we grow and are shaped by our culture.²³⁸ (Maggay 2002, 135; translation mine)

²³⁶ Jocano describes how this works: “If a man wants something from another, he would not ask for it directly. Instead, he would first hint (a technique called *pahiwatig*) what he wants and then wait for the other person’s reaction(s). If the reaction is positive, then the visitor proceeds to make the host conscious of what he wants... The host would normally say: ‘*Sige, kumuha ka* (Go ahead, take one; help yourself).’ The visitor would normally feign a refusal saying: ‘*Huwag na ho, nakakahiya* (No, it is embarrassing).’ But, when prodded further to take some of what was hinted earlier, the visitor yields and says: ‘*Sige na nga, ito po talaga ang sadya ko, ngunit nahiya lang akong magsabi.*’ (All right, this is really what I came here for, but I was too embarrassed to ask)” (Jocano 1997, 76).

²³⁷ “The Filipino is famous for his/her myriad ways of expressing emotions without quite “telling it like it is.” Sometimes accused of not being frank, candid or open by his Western counterparts, the Filipino nevertheless does not see this issue as a matter of honesty or openness, but as a matter of *delicadeza* (delicate, discreet manner of communication as opposed to brashness and crassness)” (Mataragnon 1987, 470).

²³⁸ “*Sa lahat ng paraan ng pagpapahayag, ang kisolot, kumpas, at galaw ng iba’t ibang bahagi ng katawan marahil ang pinakamahirap matanto ang kahulugan. Taliwas sa wika, hindi ito self-reflexive o madaling sundan at gantihan... Ang kabuluhan ng ating mga kilos at galaw ay nakaukit sa kultura at hindi nakatalaga sa isang maayos, payak, at nakasulat na paliwanag. Ang saysay at balarila nito ay natututuhan sa walang malay na pagmamasid habang tayo’y lumalaki at hinuhubog ng kultura*” (Maggay 2002, 135).

We can say that indirect communication is due to the high level of sharing of meaning within a culture. *Pahiwatig*, even if it is complex and highly uncertain in meaning, is understood by everyone inside and bearers of the general culture.²³⁹ (Maggay 2002, 68; translation mine)

Because tones of voice, facial expressions and body language are non-verbal, it is hard to capture it in the literature. It is difficult to find evidence for *pakikiramdam* in historical or literary texts. It is better to live in and immerse oneself in the culture so as to know what can be said and cannot be said, and what should only be communicated indirectly. Also, the ways of reading the other person and what signs are to be considered significant is something that is first learned in the family, it takes a lot of training. “*Pakikiramdam* is considered by many to be an art, although it is generally agreed to be an art that is cultivated and acquired rather than inborn” (Mataragnon 1987, 472). “*Pakikiramdam* is good training for emotional intelligence” (Mansukhani 2005, 200).

Of course, the question arises, why is this all necessary and why should *pakikiramdam* be considered a virtue? It is because the goal of *pakikiramdam* is the goal of Filipino virtue ethics as a whole.

Pakikiramdam is considered to be a stepping-stone to *pakikiisa* (being one with others) and definitely a sign of *pakikipagkapwa* (other-orientation; sense of fellow-being). In this sense, *pakikiramdam* could be seen as the solution to the philosophical problem of “the other mind,” as the concept of the self extended, of shared individually [sic], of the unindividuated ego. (Mataragnon 1987, 472)

I disagree with Mataragnon that *pakikiramdam* is the solution to the “problem of the other mind;” rather, it simply ignores the epistemological problem. For *pakikiramdam* that modern problem does not even exist. Like I said Filipino concepts are “pre-modern” concepts (cf. Chapter 2). The *loób* does not question if the other person has a “subjective mind,” rather it takes for granted that the *kapwa* is another *loób* (cf. section 3.2.1). On the other hand, Mataragnon is correct that *pakikiramdam* is a “stepping-stone” to *pakikiisa* (same as *pagkakaisa*), which is unity with the *kapwa* (cf. section 3.3). The assumption is, how can you be “one” with the other if you’re not even capable of reading his or her inner state and acting accordingly? Relationship requires a thorough sensitivity and familiarity with the other. To know the other’s *loób* requires what Maggay calls “mental role-playing” that asks “if I were the other, how would I feel?” (Mataragnon 1987, 471). Furthermore, it requires a willingness to act on the basis of these signals for the welfare of the relationship.

The virtue of *pakikiramdam* is integrated into a culture which has not yet isolated reason from the *loób* (cf. section 3.1.4). It is guided not by propositional

²³⁹ “*Masasabi nating ang di-tuwirang pamamahayag ay sanhi ng mataas na antas ng pagbabahaginan ng kahulugan sa isang kultura. Ang pahiwatig, kahit masalimuot at mataas ang pagkaalanganin ng kahulugan, ay nauunawaan ng lahat ng nasa loob at kabahagi sa pangkalahatang kultura*” (Maggay 2002, 68).

statements but by a certain kind of sensitivity and intuition. As Mataragnon says, “*pakikiramdam* is not so much cognitive but affective” (Mataragnon 1987, 479). Or as Jocano says, “Psychologically, we [Filipinos] are a highly sensitive people... We reason more with our hearts than with our minds” (Jocano 1997, 9).²⁴⁰ Manuel Dy also says the same thing:

A Filipino hardly acts on the basis of his rationality. Not that he is irrational or does not use his head, but he tends to act more from the promptings of his heart, from an intuitive and immediate grasp of reality. More accurately, he acts from his *kalooban*, which is in reality, inseparably heart-mind. (Dy 1994a, 20)

I agree with how Dy connects “heart-mind” with the *kalooban*, which is also the *loób*. It points to the “holistic” nature of the *loób* in which reason is still contained in the will. *Pakikiramdam* is the virtue of the *loób* which tries to use all the faculties holistically to know the *kapwa* and preserve a healthy relationship with the *kapwa*.

“Without *pakikiramdam*, one is seen as dense and insensitive (*manhid*), clueless, inconsiderate, tactless and shameless” (Gastardo-Conaco 2009, 313). It is the inability, or the refusal, to read the other’s non-verbal cues or to make an effort to read the other’s inner state. Though it might not immediately make one a “bad” person, the lack of *pakikiramdam* tends to affect the operation of the other virtues, which in turn leads to graver negative consequences.

4.4.2 Jokes (*biro*), *lambing* and *tampo*

Perhaps a good key to understanding *pakikiramdam*, especially for non-Filipinos, is through jokes. Not all jokes are funny to all people. The same joke may be funny for some, dull or obscure for others, and even offensive for some. It depends on a lot of things. For example, consider the following jokes about former Philippine President Joseph “Erap” Estrada, the action star who became president and is often described as dim-witted.

(Lunch)

After finishing the main course at a lunch meeting with Clinton, Erap is asked if he would like another serving.

Erap replies politely: “No thank you. I’m fed up already.”

(Airplane)

Steward: Sir are you done?

Erap: No, I’m Erap

Steward: I mean are you finished sir?

Erap: No, I’m a Filipino

Steward: I mean are you through?

²⁴⁰ Jocano speaks of *damdamin* (feeling), a word related to *pakikiramdam*: “*Damdamin* also accounts for much of our being personal and sensitive as Filipinos in almost everything we do. Even an unguarded or unintentional comment, stare, or reprimand can cause serious, often fatal, conflicts. Emotionalism is given higher premium than rationalism in handling situations or in coping with conditions” (Jocano 1997, 69).

Erap: What do you think of me, FALSE?

(Allegations)

In a cabinet meeting ERAP (very angrily) :

“THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF ALLEGATIONS THESE DAYS AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO THE ‘ALLIGATORS’ ARE”!

(Doctor)

US Doctor: Mr. President, you have a brain tumor.

Erap: hahahahaha

US Doctor: Why are you laughing?

Erap: I’m laughing because in the Philippines I have no brain but here, I have two more!

Before trying to deliver such jokes however I should know a little bit about my audience—do they know about Erap? Are they willing to have fun at his expense (perhaps they’re his supporters)? Would they consider such jokes too “cheap?” A person telling a joke must know enough about the audience or else the joke could fail. As Ted Cohen says, executing a joke requires a certain “intimacy” between speaker and audience—a knowledge of the audience’s backgrounds and inner states—to make them laugh (Cohen 1999). And when the joke is successful, it strengthens that intimacy because it confirms a shared background. They understand each other beyond the level of indicative statements, at a level that allows them to manifest humor and laugh together. The more obscure the joke, the greater the intimacy involved. But you know that something has gone awry when the speaker ends up having to “explain” the joke to the audience.

Jokes are filled with other communication cues: tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and the perfect timing to deliver the punchline. Some jokes, as good as they are, will flop when delivered in monotone or in an uncertain voice. This whole experience of jokes is a good introduction to *pakikiramdam*. Jokes, laughing and teasing are a huge part of Filipino culture, especially around the dinner table or during feasts and celebrations. In a Filipino context Maggay says: “Joking/teasing is also a measure of our closeness or level of comfort with others. We do not joke or tease *other* people”²⁴¹ (Maggay 2002, 87; translation mine).

Joking is universal, but there are other forms of behavior that are more unique to Filipino culture. *Tampo* is a show of sulkiness when someone close has disappointed by not meeting expectations. However, one usually does not tell the guilty person directly, but expects him to discover and understand this on his own (because figuring it out shows that the guilty person is sensitive and aware of the inner state of the one with *tampo*). *Lambing* is another concept. It is showing affection (which to an outsider might look obnoxious) to either confirm the

²⁴¹ “[*Ang biro ay*] isa ring sukatan ng pagkakalapit o antas ng pagpapalagayang-loob. Hindi natin binibiro ang ibang tao” (Maggay 2002, 87).

relationship, to gain a favour, or to get one's way. Enriquez clearly associates the expressions of “*biro-lambing-tampo* (tease/joke-sweetness/caress-resent/disappoint)” with *pakikiramdam* (Enriquez 1992, 78). Maggay describes *tampo* this way:

Tampo is a feeling that is brought about by disappointment over something that is expected from a close person. The common object of *tampo* is a romantic relation, a sibling, parent, or close friend... This signal of pain in the *loób* is often expressed through non-verbal messages such as stillness, avoidance of contact, sneering and pouting, absence in invited occasions, frowning, and other indications of being hurt. *Tampo* is also a kind of sulking: the desire to be alone, to be distant from others as a sign of the suppressed hurt feelings towards a person. The sulking due to *tampo* expects a response whereby the one concerned will sense the emotion and make an affectionate approach in order to bring back the previous liveliness of the relationship of the participants.²⁴² (Maggay 2002, 138; translation mine)

As Enriquez says, *tampo* can only be expressed towards someone whom one is close with. The understanding that is accomplished through *tampo* confirms the high level of mutual knowledge or intimacy.

Tampo exists only when a relatively high degree of relationship is established or thought to be established... *Tampo* can never be expressed to strangers. It can be directed only toward a member of the family, among friends, or to a loved one. *Tampo* is a delicate feeling or behavior that is a result of not getting what a person wants from a person he loves. (Enriquez 1992, 94)

Enriquez also adds that one of the situations in which *tampo* is manifested is when *utang-na-loób* is not shown when it should be.²⁴³ It may signal a disappointment with the status of the *kapwa* relationship, while still working within the expected parameters of a *kapwa* relationship that involves empathy and indirect communication.

Meanwhile, *lambing* involves an opposite set of gestures, which may include playful caresses, silly voices and expressions, childish acts and flirtations. As Maggay says, “*lambing* is similar to *tampo*, being the positive aspect of *tampo*”²⁴⁴ (Maggay 2002, 138; translation mine). It is not necessarily romantic, as it can involve family

²⁴² “Ang *tampo* ay isang damdaming dala ng pagkabigo sa isang bagay na inaasahan sa isang malapit na tao. Ang karaniwang pinag-uukulan nito ay ang kasintahan, kapatid, magulang, at matalik na kaibigan... Ito ang pagpapahiwatig ng sakit ng loob na malimit dinaraan sa mga di-verbal na mensahe gaya ng pagwawalangkibo, pag-iwas sa kinauukulan, pag-irap at paglabi, di-pagsipot sa mga paanyaya, pagsimangot, at iba pang palatandaan ng paghihinakit. Ang *tampo* rin ay isang uri ng pagmumukmok: ang pagnanais na makapag-isa, lumayo sa iba bilang di-verbal na pagpapahiwatig ng kinukuyom na sama ng loob sa isang tao. Ang pagmumukmok na dulot ng *tampo* ay umaasa na ang pinag-uukulan ay makararamdam ng gayong damdamin at gagawa na kinakailangang karinyo upang manumbalik ang dating sigla ng pagtinginan ng mga kalahok” (Maggay 2002, 138).

²⁴³ “*Tampo* is the first thing felt and/or manifested in the face of a supposedly unrecognized or unreciprocated *utang na loob*” (Enriquez 1992, 78).

²⁴⁴ “Katulad ng *tampo* ang *lambing*, ang positibong aspekto nito” (Maggay 2002, 138).

members, children, and close friends (especially childhood friends). It is a way to confirm or enliven the relationship.

For both *tampo* and *lambing* to work requires a culture that is familiar with, and even encourages, both *tampo* and *lambing*. It also requires a well-trained *pakikiramdam* to interpret these. Just as one may be skilled or unskilled when it comes to jokes, the same is true for both manifesting and interpreting *tampo* and *lambing*. “Intuitions based on *pakikiramdam* may be mistaken, particularly if one is not adept with the skill” (Mansukhani 2005, 200). This means that one who is not adept with the skill of *pakikiramdam* may mistake the signals of *tampo* or *lambing* as something else, or may fail to detect them altogether.

4.4.3 The problem with *pakikiramdam*

Just as I have pointed out problems with *utang-na-loób* when it is taken out of the interpersonal context and used in a government context (section 4.3.4), there can also be problems with *pakikiramdam* when it is used in any “professional” context such as a company, the academe, or again, the government.

Pakikiramdam is tied to an intense concern for other people’s feelings. It seems that while *pakikiramdam* remains operational the assumption is that persons and relationships are more important than ideas or issues, and this can cause a lot of confusion and disappointment if it is not clear that people are willing to take things objectively (impersonally). As Mataragnon says, by default “relationships are more important than rules and structures. There is little separation between ideas or issues and persons” (Mataragnon 1987, 474). In the Filipino academe for example, a criticism of one’s work or ideas will by default be taken as a criticism of the person who produced the work or idea and may be taken as a personal offense. It requires a complete change in attitude for two Filipino academicians to abstract from the realm of the personal to the impersonal, and to be detached from the emotions of a debate. “*Pakikiramdam* makes direct criticism of others—or even other’s ideas—difficult. This makes change difficult and tedious, because one must always try to see to it that no one gets offended” (Mansukhani 2005, 201). This phenomenon is also tied to the virtue of *hiya* and its related sub-virtue *amor propio*. *Amor propio* is a Spanish term that means “self-love,” which in the Filipino context is a defense mechanism that tries to avenge a personal affront. We will talk more about *amor propio* later (section 4.5.3.1). In professional spheres it may hamper efficiency and progress.

It has been my observation that participants in round-table discussions and seminars are extremely alert to indications of emotional involvement and will deliberately avoid pressing a question if the respondent seems too committed to his position. Where there is emotional involvement, there is *amor propio*, and to prick *amor propio* is to ask for trouble. (Lynch 1962, 99)

Because in many cases one is not allowed to voice out criticisms or grievances directly without risking conflict, Mansukhani is right that *pakikiramdam* may result in gossip.

Pakikiramdam may actually encourage gossip. If *pakikiramdam* reveals undercurrents from the other which one is not allowed to address directly, perhaps the only way to address what has been sensed is by talking about it with a third party. This is in fact a common phenomenon in Filipino culture. (Mansukhani 2005, 200)

The problem is further compounded by the fact that gossip may solidify the relationships of those who share in the gossip, especially if they have a common grievance against another person. This is one of the ironies of *pakikiramdam*. If *pakikiramdam* dictates that one cannot confront another person directly, people will start talking behind that person's back with others who share a similar difficulty. This can cause serious problems within professional settings.

In short, the default in *pakikiramdam* is that everything is "personal." As Bonifacio says, "We have not yet reached a point in our socio-cultural development where we can segregate subjective involvement from objective involvement" (Bonifacio 1977, 31). This is again an indication of the confusion of traditions and a "hybrid culture" that is still in the process of synthesis (cf. section 2.3.3). Miranda agrees about "the emphasis on the personal rather than the impersonal factor, making it difficult to dissociate personalities from ideas and events, or making it impossible to judge according to abstract criteria like logic or law" (Miranda 2003, 227). This is indeed a challenging point to address, because on the one hand there are now international standards for business ethics and academic conduct which require a detachment from personal relationship or emotional involvement; on the other hand, there may also be instances when maintaining a positive personal relationship is able to enhance an operation especially within the context of Filipino culture.

Problems are solved more easily when approached through good personal relations than through argumentation and debate or through impersonal memoranda. Communication tends to bog down unless it projects a personalized attention or unless it has a personal touch. (Jocano 1997, 64)

The issue at heart is still a conflict between traditions, between the demands of personal relationship and impersonal professionalism. It is not ideal to completely obliterate the one in favor of the other, but to seek some kind of compromise or reconciliation. The ethical practices that can be recommended as "norms" for this reconciliation is something that still needs to be thought out and tested in practice. The articulation of a Filipino virtue ethics at least makes the problem clearer, and it prepares the way for articulating a solution (cf. section 2.4).

Despite these problems and conflicts however, the goal of *pakikiramdam* is consistent with the goal of Filipino virtue ethics as a whole: unity (*pagkakaisa*). It is

an important virtue in treating the other person as *kapwa* whose feelings must be valued and taken into consideration. “A person who has no other-orientation, no sense of fellow human beings [*kapwa*], will not feel for them and practice *pakikiramdam* with them” (Mataragnon 1987, 479). It is also important in the performance and regulation of the other Filipino virtues. *Pakikiramdam* is a “relational prudence” that allows one to come to a deeper knowledge of, and connection with, the other person as *kapwa*. It contributes to an experiential, mostly non-propositional, knowledge of what it means to *be in* a dynamic relationship with the *kapwa*.

Pakikiramdam [is] deep interpersonal connection. At its most profound level, *pakikiramdam* can be understood as a deep connection with another human being free from the social roles. At its core, then, *pakikiramdam* is a relational and dialogical process by which I come to a deeper understanding of the personhood of the other, and by so doing, come to a deeper understanding of my own personhood as well. We both reach a point where each of us sense not only a deep connection but understand that we share in a common humanity, that we participate in a shared self. This notion of shared self, or *kapwa*, is important to our understanding of *pakikiramdam*. (Mansukhani 2005, 194)

4.5 *Hiya*

4.5.1 The virtue of *hiya* versus the passion of *hiya*

Hiya is a misunderstood concept which has received severe criticisms²⁴⁵ in the past because scholars did not realize that there were two kinds of *hiya*, the virtue of *hiya* and the passion (or emotion) of *hiya*. I am the first to point out this very important distinction. For the sake of convenience, I will designate them as *hiya(v)* and *hiya(p)* respectively. *Hiya(v)* is a kind of conscious self-control or restraint (something similar to temperance). It connotes an active effort, such as in forcing one’s voice to be mild while angry. *Hiya(p)* is more like shame, shyness, or embarrassment. It is something that happens to the person, something the person undergoes or suffers (the word “passion” comes from the word *pati*, “to suffer”), such as when one commits a *faux pas*, or when one is called “stupid” in front of others.

The distinction is slightly complex because *hiya* can have different affixations (prefixes or suffixes) that can change its meaning (Bonifacio, 1976; Salazar 1985). My notion of *hiya(p)* is closer to *napahiya* (shamed) while *hiya(v)* is closer to *kahihayan* (sense of propriety). Pe-Pua notices the priority of the latter when she says: “after all

²⁴⁵ One notorious criticism is from Emerita Quito who says that *hiya* is “negative, because it arrests or inhibits one’s action. This trait reduces one to smallness or to what Nietzsche calls the ‘morality of slaves’, thus congealing the soul of the Filipino and emasculating him, making him timid, meek and weak” (Quito 1994, 58). When she tries to determine the positive side of *hiya* she says it is positive because “it contributes to peace of mind and lack of stress by not even trying to achieve.” Even her “positive” assessment does not sound very positive.

is said and done, the more appropriate translation of *hiya* in English is not ‘shame’ but ‘sense of propriety’” (2000, 55). The other forms of *hiya* such as *mahiyain* (shy; an adjective of the subject), *nahihiya* (being shy; a verb), *nakakahiya* (embarrassing/shameful; an adjective of the situation) may spring from either of the two principal versions of *hiya*. So for example one can be *nahihiya* (the act of being shy) either on account of *hiya(p)* or *hiya(v)*. There is a difference between one who is being shy because she can’t help it (e.g. her heart is pounding wildly, she is almost paralyzed with fear on stage), and someone who is shy because she doesn’t want to exploit the kindness of a friend (e.g. she begs off from the offer to be driven back home since she knows her friend lives far away). To keep matters simple, we will avoid talking about the grammatical variants of *hiya* and just concentrate on the two principal ones.

Because most early scholars did not have virtue as an interpretative option they only talked of *hiya(p)* as an “uncomfortable” passion and this restricted the understanding of *hiya* ever since. For example, the pioneer Frank Lynch described *hiya* in this way:

The generic meaning of *hiya* is *the uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action* [his emphasis]. *Hiya* is *shame*, but the feeling is aroused in various ways. (Lynch 1962, 97)

Lynch is only describing *hiya(p)* here. Arriving at a party wearing casual clothes and only then discovering that it was a formal function is an example of “being in a socially unacceptable position” or “performing a socially unacceptable” action. It would arouse *hiya(p)* because of the *faux pas* and perhaps even compel one to leave or at least to change clothes.

Bulatao meanwhile seems to waver in between *hiya(v)* and *hiya(p)*. His terms for it such as “timidity” and “sensitivity” seem to lean more towards the virtue, while “shyness” and “embarrassment” seem to lean more towards the passion (Bulatao 1964, 424). But since he lacks virtue as an interpretative option he ends by saying “*hiyâ* is a painful emotion. It is something like fear or a sense of inadequacy and anxiety in an uncontrolled and threatening situation” (Bulatao 1964, 426). Guthrie says basically the same thing when he says that *hiya* is “a feeling of inferiority, embarrassment, shyness, and of alienation, which is experienced as acutely distressing” (Guthrie 1968, 62). So it was an “uncomfortable feeling” for Lynch, a “painful emotion” for Bulatao and an “acutely distressing feeling” for Guthrie. It is no wonder that pioneering scholars were reluctant to even call it a “value.” It sounds odd to endorse a painful feeling as a defining characteristic of Filipino culture. Let us look at two examples of *hiya(p)* from Bulatao.

A three-year old girl is told by her mother to greet a guest. Instead, the little girl turns away from the guest and buries her face in her mother’s knees. The mother strokes

her head and says to the guest, “Nahihyâ pala ang aking anak. Ay sús!” [“My daughter is still shy. Oh dear!”]

Two men are drinking *tuba* [local fermented wine] in a *sari-sari* store. One of them jokingly pulls up the back of the other one’s undershirt and rubs the back with his palm. The other pulls out a knife and kills him. Later, the lawyer in court justifies the killing by saying, “*Napahiyâ siya e* [“He was shamed, that’s why”].” (Bulatao 1964, 424-425)

The little girl above is suffering from a certain shyness or trepidation. She suffers it almost instinctively and automatically, and since she is still young she understandably does not have the resources or maturity to overcome this shyness towards the stranger. Insofar as she is not in control of it, but is overcome by it, then it can be called an instance of *hiya(p)*. The second is more extreme. The man whose undershirt was pulled up was embarrassed and made fun of in public. He suffered *hiya(p)* from another man. Judging from the response, the *hiya(p)* must have been very intense. His brutal response can also be attributed to his *amor propio*, a defense mechanism that often accompanies the suffering of *hiya(p)* and the loss of a sense of dignity. *Amor propio* has often also been confused with *hiya* but it is not *hiya* per se but a defensive response to its absence (we will talk more about *amor propio* below in section 4.5.3.1).

What is interesting about the second example is that though Bulatao does not talk about *hiya(v)* its absence is, in a way, conspicuous. If only the other man (who made the prank) was more cautious and restrained, he could have avoided being killed. There was something that he (the prankster) lacked which could have saved his life. It was the virtue of *hiya(v)*.

Consider what Francis Senden says about *hiya*, which leans more towards the virtue of *hiya(v)* and not the passion of *hiya(p)*:

Then you [Filipinos] have the *hiya*, which is again very beautiful. The *hiya* means sensitivity. Every human being is sensitive, but there are degrees of sensitivity. And my experience is that the Filipinos are very sensitive. But this is not a defect – it is a virtue... You don’t insult people in public and you expect that nobody will insult you in public. If you call a Filipino to your office and you are alone with him, you may tell him everything; he will not resent it. But if you do it in public he cuts off relations with you. If you call somebody in public *loko*, he severs relations with you. But because he himself is so sensitive, he will avoid insulting others. He will, as a rule, not insult people in public. (Senden 1974, 50)

Senden is explicit about calling *hiya* “sensitivity” and also calling it a “virtue.” This sensitivity prevents one from insulting other people in public. Instead of “sensitivity” I prefer to use the phrase “sense of propriety.” If the prankster in Bulatao’s second example only had a “sense of propriety” that is *hiya(v)*, then he would not have played a fatal joke on the other man by pulling up the man’s undershirt and rudely rubbing his back. There are other manifestations of *hiya(v)*

besides not insulting other people in public, but this is the most common because it considers the most important area of human relationships, verbal and non-verbal communication. The virtue of *hiya(v)* therefore is closely connected to the previous virtue of *pakikiramdam* which is a well-trained sensitivity or empathy about other people's inner states (section 4.4.1). *Pakikiramdam* detects when a line is being crossed, *hiya(v)* restrains oneself from trespassing over the line even if one's impulses are very strong.²⁴⁶ Senden is right that this is not exclusive to Filipinos; every human being has powers of sensitivity and the opportunity to develop them. What is different is the emphasis and weight given to it in the Filipino culture.

Concern for the feelings of the other person is a central element in interpersonal relationships. Each Filipino sees another as an extremely sensitive person whose feelings may easily be slighted and whose pride may be hurt. There are several terms for this ease with which one may be offended, the Spanish term *amor propio* being the most common.²⁴⁷ (Guthrie 1968, 57)

The underlying idea is that one should avoid hurting or insulting other people at all costs. We can imagine that in the past the stakes were so high when it came to offending another person (exclusion from a tribe, withdrawal of mutual support, a duel to the death) that it easily established itself as a virtue necessary for survival. The idea of "saying whatever you want to say" or "speaking your mind" is foreign to Filipino culture. In Western culture the values of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and self-assertion are given premium place. However these are all secondary considerations in Filipino culture where the most important thing is preserving harmony in one's relationship with the *kapwa*, even if it means sacrificing one's impulse for self-assertion. This understandably leads to a lot of misunderstandings with people from the West. Again this is part of the confusion of traditions (cf. section 2.3.3).

Some foreign observers view [*hiya*] as concealed dishonesty because Filipinos do not openly express their feelings in reacting to almost all kinds of encounters (until pushed too far)—that is, whether they agree or disagree with you. As one foreign

²⁴⁶ The close knit relationship between *pakikiramdam* and *hiya* makes Mataragnon speak of *pakikiramdam* as though it were *hiya*: "*Pakikiramdam* serves as a coping mechanism to avoid offending or hurting other people." (Mataragnon 1987, 474). And conversely, de Guia speaks of *hiya* as though it were *pakikiramdam*: "In Filipino personhood, whenever *hiya* is felt, it signals that someone is out of step with the surroundings. The unity between the self and the other has temporarily fallen apart.... We are off track" (de Guia 2005, 297). Jocano also relates the two: "The saying "*Pakiramdam mo muna ang sitwasyon bago ka gumawa ng anumang bagay* (Assess the situation intuitively first [i.e., have a gut feel] before doing anything)" highlights the essence of *damdamin*, as expressed in *hiya* and other forms of emotionalism" (Jocano 1997, 77).

²⁴⁷ Guthrie goes on to say: "Related to his own sensitivity is a Filipino's fear of giving offense. Knowing how it hurts, he goes to considerable length to avoid offending others. This is partly because he does not want to hurt another, but equally because he does not go around looking for enemies. As a result he is likely to avoid outspoken statements, not emphasize what he feels strongly, and not take sides on issues. Even when the topic is of considerable importance to him, he is likely to avoid an open commitment on the matter and work instead by indirect means so that what he wants will prevail. A direct question invites a direct answer. One or the other or both may be painful. Accordingly, Filipinos engage in a good deal of oblique conversation until they are sure what an answer will be. Philippine dialects are filled with metaphors so that blunt statements with all their dangers can be avoided" (Guthrie 1968, 58).

executive of a multinational company has said in an interview: “Sometimes they (Filipinos) say ‘yes’ to whatever you say. Oftentimes, they do not tell you exactly what they think or how they feel. They just remain silent, and you have to read their true feelings in the way they smile.” (Jocano 1997, 73)

Hiya(v) is not an individual virtue but a communal and relational virtue. It has its origins in the preservation of harmonious relationships first within the immediate family, then outward towards the clan and the tribe. Jocano undertook a study of life in a small Philippine *barrio* or rural town where the familial and communal nature of *hiya(v)* was still very tangible.

[*Hiya*] is put into practice when what is infringed upon deals with relationships pertaining to (1) personal dignity or honor of the individual; (2) the status or position of the principal actor relative to other people; (3) the internal cohesion of the family as a unit; and (4) the reputation of the entire kin group relative to the outside world. (Jocano 1969, 98)

Because of its communal nature, Jocano also talks of *hiya* as a “norm” or as a matter of “traditional rules.”²⁴⁸ Likewise Holnsteiner calls it a “norm” or a “social sanction” or “a sense of social propriety.”²⁴⁹ To clarify, it is not so much a matter of following “rules,” especially since most of these rules are not even explicitly articulated, but the norm is a collective expectation that people should have this particular virtue of *hiya(v)*, and having this virtue of *hiya(v)* leads to commendable and predictable actions that preserves harmony within the community. As Salazar says, “*hiya* is a complete social feeling. It is not only passive but active as well” (Salazar 1985, 295). To paraphrase, *hiya(v)* is an active virtue that seeks to benefit the whole community.

Holnsteiner is notable because she relates *hiya* closely to the other virtue of *utang-na-loób*. According to her *hiya* prevents one from forgetting his or her *utang-na-loób* to others.²⁵⁰ This is true, but *hiya(v)* is in fact related to all the Filipino virtues in one way or another since they are all about establishing and preserving the relationship with the *kapwa*. To have *hiya(v)* is an integral part of treating another

²⁴⁸ “As a **norm**, [*hiya*] prescribes how we should behave in relation to one another in a specific situation, condition, or circumstance so that we do not offend or hurt feelings... in order to prevent unnecessary embarrassment, shame, or conflict” (Jocano 1997, 73; emphasis mine). “To avoid hurting the feelings of others or of one’s own, the right approach to interaction is to observe *hiya*. In fact, it is expected that if one wants to be an effective communicator, he must follow the **traditional rules** of relating to other Filipinos...” (Jocano 1997, 77; emphasis mine).

²⁴⁹ “*Hiyâ* is the universal social sanction that regulates the give and take of reciprocity and, in general, all social behavior. *Hiyâ* may be translated as “a sense of social propriety”; as a preventive, it makes for conformity to community norms. When one violates such a norm he ordinarily feels a deep sense of shame, a realization of having failed to live up to the standards of society” (Holnsteiner 1973, 75).

²⁵⁰ “Failure to discharge one’s *utang na loób* by repaying with interest brings, or should bring, *hiyâ*, or shame, on the side of the guilty party” (Holnsteiner 1973, 75). “*Hiyâ* is thus distinguishable from *utang na loób*, the latter being an operating principle in Philippine society and the former the universal sanction reinforcing the desirability of feeling and honoring *utang na loób*. *Hiyâ* is not necessarily accompanied by *utang na loób*, but *utang na loób* is always reinforced by *hiyâ*” (Holnsteiner 1973, 84).

person as *kapwa*. It means thinking of the other first before oneself, and being willing to sacrifice one's impulse for the sake of others.

Another example of *hiya(v)* is what frequently happens with guests around a dining table. When there is one last piece of *ulam* on the serving plate, say a piece of fried chicken, *hiya(v)* dictates that you should not take that last piece of fried chicken even if you wanted to take it. This is because you have to think about others first. Taking that last piece of *ulam* on your own initiative means that you are thinking primarily of yourself and not the needs of those around you. Of course, if everyone around the table had *hiya(v)* then that last piece of *ulam* would probably stay there for good. But the standstill is usually resolved when the host suggests to a certain guest to take the last piece, sometimes with the accompanying plea, "*Sige na, huwag ka nang mahiya* (Come on, don't be shy)."

These considerations lead us to a definition of *hiya(v)*. **The virtue of *hiya* is a good habit of one's *loób* that makes one control or restrain selfish impulses or desires in word or action, for the welfare of the *kapwa*.** The most common situation of *hiya(v)* is in not making another person suffer *hiya(p)* through verbal or non-verbal communication, especially in public. As mentioned, among the various affixed forms it is *kahihyan* ("sense of propriety") that is closest in meaning to *hiya(v)*.

The lack of *hiya(v)* is called *walang hiya* (without *hiya*), and the expression "*walang hiya ka!*" is used as a curse in the Filipino language.²⁵¹ According to Holnsteiner, "to call a Filipino *walang hiyâ*, or 'shameless,' is to wound him seriously" (Holnsteiner 1973, 75). It implies that one has a serious defect especially in how one relates with other people.

One who has flagrantly violated socially approved norms of conduct, yet is known or presumed to have had this antecedent awareness, merits condemnation as "shameless," or *walang hiya*: he did not possess that restraining feeling of shame that should have accompanied his social awareness. (Lynch 1962, 97)

Note that Lynch calls both forms of *hiya* simply "feeling," but the "restraining feeling of shame" here is not just the passion but the virtue. It is active and not just passive; it actively "restrains." And it is absent in the person who is *walang hiya*. Bulatao gives several casual examples of *walang hiya*:

A group of college boys are gathered around a cafeteria table. One of them gets up, buys himself a coke, and returns to the table. He is greeted with the remark, "*Walang hiyâ ka naman* [How insensitive!]", the implication being that he should have bought cokes for everyone else.

²⁵¹ Sometimes it may also be used in a humorous way. For example, when someone achieves some extraordinary feat like shooting the basketball from half-court, people could exclaim "*Walanghiya! Ang galing ah!* [Gosh! That's great!]." I think that this is a derivate use of *walang hiya*, similar to how sometimes English curse words can be used in more humorous situations (e.g. "that's *f*cking* amazing!").

A jeepney driver speeds close past a couple of pedestrians trying to cross the street. One of them, an elderly lady says, “*Walang hiyâ ang mga taong ito* [These people have no manners].”

A boy agrees to pass by his girl friend to take her to the movies. He fails to show up for his appointment. The next time she sees him, she says, “*Walang hiyâ ka. Bakit ka nag Indian?* [You are shameless. Why did you ditch me?].” (Bulatao 1964, 428-429)

Bulatao explains that *walang hiya* “involves a crassness and insensibility to the feelings of others” (Bulatao 1964, 429) and that “it is a lack of anxious care for society’s acceptance” (Bulatao 1964, 430). For Miranda it is “to cut off one’s relatedness to others, to seek the worth of one’s life and person apart from others” (Miranda 1992, 203). In the context of *kapwa*, *walang hiya* amounts to ignoring the other person as *kapwa* and thinking only of oneself.

Someone is especially *walang hiya* when he tends to exploit other people’s kindness, generosity or trust. In this sense it is practically synonymous with *walang utang-na-loób*. Indeed, many Filipino scholars mention the two simultaneously.²⁵² The child who was raised with a comfortable life, thanks to his hard-working parents, but who ends up ignoring and neglecting them in their old age is *walang hiya*. He does not care to return his parents’ sacrifices for him. Someone who is shown hospitality and allowed to stay in a friend’s house but who ends up stealing from his friend is *walang hiya*. He repays hospitality with a crime. A man who sexually harasses a female friend who trusted in him completely is *walang hiya*, he exploited that trust to satisfy his own desires. One can think of numerous similar examples. There is a range of ways in how one can ignore the other person as *kapwa*, but the main idea is putting one’s self first at the expense of other people. These ones are graver cases because other people have taken the initiative of kindness and trust and deserved a commensurate return. Instead they were repaid with abuse. Jocano gives a warning about people who are *walang hiya* and says that they are “insensitive to the feelings of others... and cannot be trusted as friends” (Jocano 1997, 78).

4.5.2 *Hiya* and Aquinas’ temperance

I made the crucial distinction between *hiya(p)* and *hiya(v)* simply by following Aquinas’ own distinction between “shame” or “shamefacedness” (*verecundia*) and “temperance” (*temperantia*). The first is a passion (in modern parlance “passion” is closer to “emotion” but “passion” is used here for its more precise philosophical sense; cf. Glossary in section 1.2). It is a species of fear. “Shame is the fear of what is

²⁵² “True moral shame is to have forgotten that one is because of his past, a past created by others, a past owed to others. To forget that is *walang hiya* [without shame], because [he is] *walang utang na loob* [no sense of gratitude]” (Miranda 1992, 203). “Indeed, as studies of Tagalog reciprocity indicated, the worst thing one can say about a person is that he or she is *walang hiya*, without shame, which is the same as to say that the person is *walang utang na loob*, without any sense of indebtedness” (Rafael 1993, 127). “Anybody without the sense of ‘debt of volition’ [*utang-na-loob*] is considered ‘shameless’ (*walang hiyâ*), an expression which most Filipinos resent” (Mercado 1976, 65).

base.”²⁵³ Aquinas also says: “Shamefacedness [or shame] is inconsistent with perfection, because it is the fear of something base, namely of that which is disgraceful. Hence Damascene says (De Fide Orth. ii, 15) that ‘shamefacedness [or shame] is fear of a base action’.”²⁵⁴

Verecundia has a social more than a theological dimension. “Shame is not fear of the very act of sin, but of the disgrace or ignominy which arises therefrom, and which is due to an extrinsic cause.”²⁵⁵ This disgrace comes from other people, and it is possible that the deed is not a sin per se, but something that society just finds disgraceful. Hence it is practically the same as what Lynch was describing in *hiya(p)*, “the uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action [his emphasis]” (Lynch 1962, 97).

Aquinas is clear that *verecundia* is not a virtue but a passion.²⁵⁶ He gets this from Aristotle who says:

Shame is not properly regarded as a virtue, since it would seem to be more like a feeling than like a state [of character]. It is defined, at any rate, as a sort of fear of disrepute, and its expression is similar to that of fear of something terrifying; for a feeling of disgrace makes people blush, and fear of death makes them turn pale. Hence both [types of fear] appear to be in some way bodily [reactions], which seem to be more characteristic of feelings than of states. (*Nicomachean Ethics* IV.9; Irwin trans. 1999, 66).

Because Aquinas was dwelling on the individual experience of *verecundia*, he did not say much about the *verecundia* that is provoked from being insulted or embarrassed by another person, which is more emphasized in the interpersonal relationships of Filipino virtue ethics. But what is most important here is that there is a clear distinction between the passions and the virtues which can be used for a nuanced understanding of *hiya*. *Hiya(p)* is essentially the *verecundia* of Aquinas, but with a more relational and communal tendency.

Hiya(v) on the other hand is similar to the temperance (*temperantia*) of Aquinas, but also with a more relational and communal tendency. Temperance is the virtue that subjects the desires of the sensitive appetite to the rule of right reason.

²⁵³ “*Verecundia quae est timor turpis*” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 24, a. 4, *respondeo*; translation mine).

²⁵⁴ “*Verecundia autem repugnat perfectioni. Est enim timor alicuius turpis, quod scilicet est exprobrabile, unde Damascenus dicit quod verecundia est timor de turpi actu*” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1777).

²⁵⁵ “*Verecundia non est timor de actu ipso peccati, sed de turpitudine vel ignomia, quae consequitur ipsum, quae est a causa extrinseca*” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 42, a. 3, ad 4; Fathers trans. 1947, 769).

²⁵⁶ “Shamefacedness, properly speaking, is not a virtue... Now shamefacedness denotes, not a habit but a passion, nor does its movement result from choice, but from an impulse of passion. Hence it falls short of the notion of virtue (*Verecundia proprie loquendo non est virtus... Verecundia autem non nominat habitum, sed passionem. Neque motus eius est ex electione, sed ex impetu quodam passionis. Unde deficit a ratione virtutis*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II q. 144, a. 1, *respondeo* & ad 1; Fathers trans. 1947, 1777).

“Temperance, which subjects the appetite to reason in matters directly relating to life, in the one individual, or in the one species, viz. in matters of food and of sex.”²⁵⁷

Temperance means a moderation of one’s natural desires in accordance with right reason. The natural desires are good in themselves and required for the individual and the species to survive, but one can exceed what is right, just as in gluttony (*gula*) or voluptuousness (*luxuria*). The problem in relating this with *hiya* is that *loób* does not segregate either reason or the sensitive appetites. *Loób* is a holistic and relational will that deals with human relationships. The counterpart of temperance, which is called *hiya(v)*, does not deal with food, drink and sex, but instead with a restraint and moderation in how one relates to other people. Whereas, “The proximate matter of temperance is desires and pleasures but the remote matter is food, drink, and sexual acts”²⁵⁸, one could say that the proximate matter of *hiya(v)* is individual impulse or desire and the remote matter is the expression and fulfilment of that individual desire that could possibly compromise the *kapwa*. What temperance is able to do when it comes to natural desires, *hiya(v)* is able to do in the social and relational sphere. *Hiya(v)* can thus be called a “relational temperance.”

Because *hiya(v)* and temperance (*temperantia*) are similar there are conceivable overlaps between the two virtues. With the dining room example where there is a last piece of fried chicken at the center of the table, to not get that last piece of food can be both a practice of temperance (especially if one has eaten enough) and also of *hiya(v)* (to show concern for others). But both involve restraint, self-control, and moderation, for the sake of some good. The guiding principle of temperance is what is good for oneself in accord with right reason (*recta ratio*) while the guiding principle of *hiya(v)* is what is good for the *kapwa* and the *kapwa*-relationship as gauged through *pakikiramdam*. Whereas temperance has an individual aspect to it (one can practice temperance as a solitary individual), *hiya(v)* is relational by definition and makes sense only with respect to other people. Interestingly, the way that Wojtyla develops the notion of temperance within a marriage relationship almost makes it resemble *hiya* more closely:

The satisfaction of the passions is, in fact, one thing, quite another is the joy a person finds in possessing himself more fully, since in this way he can also become more fully a true gift for another person. (John Paul II 2006, 359)

²⁵⁷ “*Temperantia, quae subiicit rationi appetitum circa ea, quae immediate ordinantur ad vitam vel in eodem secundum numerum, vel in eodem secundum speciem, scilicet in cibis et venereis*” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 66, a. 4, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 869). Aquinas also says: “The object of temperance is a good in respect of the pleasures connected with the concupiscence of touch. The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences: while the material element is something on the part of the concupiscences (*Temperantiae obiectum est bonum delectabile in concupiscentiis tactus. Cuius quidem obiecti formalis ratio est a ratione, quae instituit modum in his concupiscentiis, materiale autem est id, quod est ex parte concupiscentiarum*)” (*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 63, a. 4, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 856-857).

²⁵⁸ “*Temperantiae autem materia proxima concupiscentiae et delectationes, materia autem remota cibi et actus venerei*” (*Sententia libri ethicorum*, lib. 4, l. 1, n. 4; Litzinger trans. 1993, 212).

If temperance is reconceived as a means to be a “more fully a true gift for another person” then it comes even closer to the spirit of *hiya(v)*. Wojtyla says this within the context of marriage, especially since this is the proper sphere of the sexual passions, but if this understanding is expanded and generalized beyond sexual passion and the marital relationship, it can describe what *hiya(v)* aims to achieve for the *kapwa*.

4.5.3 *Amor propio*, *pakikisama*, and “crab mentality”

I defined *hiya(v)* as **a good habit of one’s *loób* that makes one control or restrain selfish impulses or desires in word or action, for the welfare of the *kapwa***. There are at least three concepts which seem to exhibit similar or related features and are thus often equated with *hiya*, but which I argue are quite different. Most of these concepts have been given rather negative interpretations by scholars. The three concepts are *amor propio*, *pakikisama*, and “crab mentality (group *amor propio*).” This is how I would organize them in relation to *hiya(v)*:

	Virtue proper	Response to the lack of virtue
Mostly individual	<i>hiya(v)</i>	<i>amor propio</i>
Mostly toward a group	<i>pakikisama</i>	“crab mentality” / group <i>amor propio</i>

4.5.3.1 *Amor propio*

Amor propio is a person’s response to someone who is *walang hiya* who makes him suffer *hiya(p)*. It is a “defense mechanism” so to speak, a way to retaliate or strike back. If only all persons possessed *hiya(v)* then it would never need to come to *amor propio*. However if someone lacked *hiya(v)* and deliberately offends or makes fun of someone then what is the injured party supposed to do? The natural response is to defend oneself in some way, and this is where *amor propio* comes in. For Lynch, *amor propio* is “self-esteem, which is manifested in sensitivity to personal affront” (Lynch 1962, 98) and for Mercado it is likewise “self-esteem, sensitivity to discourtesy” (Mercado 1976, 97). Jocano explains it more elaborately:

Amor propio means “self-love; self-esteem.” As a norm, it enjoins us to be sensitive to anything—a statement or an action—that threatens our self-respect or demeans our personal dignity. As one respondent has said: “We have to protect our sense of dignity as a person. Our self-pride must be preserved. We must not allow our self-worth to be undermined. We have to have our self-respect intact. That is the only thing worth fighting for.”

Seen in this context, it is understandable why we Filipinos easily get emotionally upset when an act done or statement uttered tends to insult or demean our sense of self-esteem, even if the other person did not mean to or is simply being argumentative. The emotional pain resulting from this perceived or real insult is what activates, so to speak, our *amor propio* into aggressive responses that often end in trouble. (Jocano 1997, 78)

Amor propio is only revealed after the “self-esteem” or “personal dignity” has been injured or trampled. The assumption is that people treat each other as *kapwa* by practicing *hiya(v)*; if this principle is violated then somehow the ideal must still be defended. As Miranda says, “*Amor propio* is a sense of personal dignity. It is the Filipino’s sense of self-esteem in his *kaloob-looban* [innermost sanctum], the need to be treated as a person and not as an object” (Miranda 1992, 94).²⁵⁹ Filipinos resort to *amor propio* when they are treated as less than a *kapwa*, and this is the depreciation of their “personal dignity.” To be made fun of or slandered in public, or worse, to have one’s family made fun of or slandered in public, can sometimes lead to violence. Since *amor propio* is incited only at the lack of *hiya(v)* it cannot be called a virtue *per se*. It is at best a secondary virtue, or to speak metaphorically, it is like the shadow of *hiya(v)*.

It is quite intriguing how *amor propio*, a Spanish term, easily became a natural part of the Philippine vocabulary and is now called distinctly Filipino. My guess is that it merely gave a name to something which was already there in the culture before the Spanish arrived, but which perhaps did not have a name (or perhaps an older expression was replaced?). It is known for example that early Filipinos were very zealous to guard the honor of their clan or tribe, a tendency that often led to long-lasting blood feuds and revenge killings. Such feuds still continued in the 20th century.²⁶⁰ It could be that the Spanish term *amor propio*—which was also invoked for duels of honor in Spain—fit something that the natives already had, though in their own collective and tribal way (it was more about group honor than personal honor). One recalls how Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, was willing to bear any insults directly to his name but immediately challenged Wenceslao Retana to a duel for making a humiliating remark about his family in the press (Zafra 1967, 192). The point is, Filipinos easily absorbed the expression *amor propio* not because they learned something new from the Spanish, but because it named something that was already there.

There are many cases when *hiya* and *amor propio* are confused and treated as synonyms. For example, Jocano translated *hiya* as “‘self-esteem,’ *dignidad*, *amor propio*, and *dangag* (honor)” (Jocano 1969, 98). The person who resorts to *amor propio* is someone who has suffered *hiya(p)* from another party and so it is natural to compress those two concepts together—*amor propio* and the painful emotion of *hiya(p)*. But what passes unnoticed is that both *hiya(p)* and *amor propio* could have been prevented through a virtue, namely *hiya(v)*. Virtue ethics enables us to make these finer distinctions between *amor propio*, *hiya(p)*, and *hiya(v)* whereas values theory would only confuse them all as a single concept.

²⁵⁹ Lynch also says, “*amor propio*... is not aroused by every insult, slighting remark, or offensive gesture. The stimuli that set it off are only those that strike at the individual’s most highly valued attributes” (Lynch 1962, 98).

²⁶⁰ See for instance the article of Kiefer on the Tausug of Jolo (1968) and the follow-up article by Tan (1981).

4.5.3.2 *Pakikisama*

In general *pakikisama* has a stronger connotation of a group presence than *hiya*. Scholars consistently mention the weight of the “majority” when it comes to *pakikisama*.²⁶¹ Enriquez defines *pakikisama* as “yielding to the leader or majority” (Enriquez 1992, 168). Lynch considers *pakikisama* as sometimes synonymous with smooth interpersonal relations²⁶²:

Pakikisama is a Tagalog word derived from the root *sama*, “accompany, go along with.” At times the word *pakikisama* is used as synonymous with what I understand by SIR [Smooth Interpersonal Relations]; when so employed, the word is very frequently (almost predictably) translated as “good public relations.” But I believe the term *pakikisama* is more commonly used with a meaning narrower than SIR. In this more restricted sense it means “**giving in**,” “following the lead or suggestion of another”; in a word, *concession*. It refers especially to the lauded practice of yielding to the will of the leader or **majority** so as to make the group decision unanimous. No one likes a hold-out. (Lynch 1962, 90; emphasis mine)

Jocano definitely emphasizes the group aspect of *pakikisama*:

Pakikisama refers to the commonly shared expectations, desires, or requests to get along with someone if it is necessary for the good of the group. It is derived from the root word *sama*, meaning “to accompany, to go along with.” “Getting along with” does not mean blind conformity to traditional ways because one can refuse to do so. Rather, **it is a willingness to subordinate one’s own interest in favor of others**, in the spirit of harmony, friendship, cooperation, and deference to **majority decision** so that group goals can be easily achieved. (Jocano 1997, 65-66; emphasis mine)

Because of this group priority, *pakikisama* has often been equated with “peer pressure” or mindlessly following the crowd. A distinction must be made between an inferior form of *pakikisama* which is simply doing what everyone else wants, and a *pakikisama* that stays true to the virtue principle of *hiya*. If *hiya* is about sacrificing something for the welfare of the *kapwa*, *pakikisama* concerns the welfare of the larger group composed of many *kapwa*. Taking *hiya* as the starting point *pakikisama* can be defined as **the good habit of one’s *loób* that makes one control or restrain one’s own individual desires for the welfare of the**

²⁶¹ Bulatao does not mention *pakikisama* explicitly, but some of the things that he says about *hiya* are actually better said about *pakikisama*: “*Hiyâ* is the inner form of respect due to the group... It is the inner acknowledgment that one belongs to a group and has membership duties in it” (Bulatao 1964, 437). He also talks about the “unindividuated ego” which “tends to flee a social situation where he is forced to stand out as an individual” (Bulatao 1964, 433). This can be seen as an indirect description of *pakikisama*.

²⁶² He practically elevated the status of *pakikisama* as the most important Filipino value, which drew criticisms from Filipino scholars who considered *pakikisama* subordinate to other kinds of relationship. “[*Pakikisama*] is a supposed value which was identified by western-oriented social scientists during the period of token use of the native language in Philippine social science. Isolated as a value, *pakikisama* was removed from its original context in the Filipino worldview of relationships. It was thus forgotten that *pakikisama* is just one among the many possible levels and types of interaction among Filipinos” (de Mesa 1987, 39).

group. Jocano understood it well when he said it is the “willingness to subordinate one’s own interest in favor of others” (Jocano 1997, 66). Bulatao describes the rationale behind this: “because [the unindividuated ego’s] security is found not within itself but within the group to which it is bound, it dares not let go of that group’s approval. Furthermore, it dares not assert itself independently of the group” (Bulatao 1964, 435). *Pakikisama* presupposes *hiya(v)*. One cannot have *pakikisama* without *hiya(v)*, but one can have *hiya(v)* without *pakikisama* (though ideally it should lead to *pakikisama*). *Pakikisama* is an expansion of the primary virtue of *hiya* to deal not just with single individuals but with a larger group.

A positive and responsible *pakikisama* knows how to discern if something really is for the welfare of the group, and knows how to refuse if it leads to their disadvantage. *Pakikisama* means to get along “if it is necessary for the good of the group” (Jocano 1997, 66). Furthermore, one may argue for the superiority of an expansive view of *pakikisama* rather than a narrow view of *pakikisama*. For example, a lot of Philippine corruption is perpetrated in the name of a perverted form of *pakikisama* where a small group of conspirators and cronies benefit at the expense of the whole country. The flaw is in failing to perceive who the true “majority” is and what counts for their welfare. It is indeed a serious challenge to move from a more natural clan or tribe mentality towards a Western-style democracy. In the clan or tribe it is easy to perceive who the majority is, you can see them and interact with them, you know their names. Nationhood and democracy on the other hand requires what Anderson calls an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). *Pakikisama* thrives on the “personal” rather than the “imaginary.” It is easier to have *pakikisama* towards people of flesh and blood than the big, imaginary community called a “nation.” How one should bridge the distance from clan or tribe mentality to genuine nationalism is something that Filipino philosophers should continue to discuss.

4.5.3.3 “Crab mentality” / group *amor propio*

Just as *amor propio* is a defensive response to the lack of *hiya(v)*, “crab mentality” is for those who lack the correlate virtue of *pakikisama*. Crab mentality is named after the behavior of crabs in a basket that try to climb out and in the process drag each other down so that none of them ever manage to get out. Notice that though *hiya* and *pakikisama* are native Tagalog words, both *amor propio* and “crab mentality” are of foreign coinage (even if you call it *talangka* mentality, indigenizing the animal does not make the expression indigenous).

Unfortunately, there is no entry for “crab mentality” in the Oxford English Dictionary or the Merriam-Webster dictionary, and we do not have an officially verified account of its etymology.²⁶³ My guess is that the expression “crab mentality”

²⁶³ See the Oxford English Dictionary website (www.oed.com) and the Merriam-Webster dictionary website (www.merriam-webster.com). There are only “user-submitted” definitions for “crab-mentality” in the Merriam

was first coined by Americans to describe a particular Filipino social behavior which they witnessed and which they found objectionable—objectionable from a more individualistic American point of view. Somewhere along the line it got stuck as a seal of colonial mentality, and nowadays Filipinos liberally accuse other Filipinos of it. One piece of circumstantial evidence that this expression is not of Filipino origin is that other groups who have also been subject to the Americans are said to have “crab mentality.” George Hu’eu Sanford Kanahele for example complained about how Hawaiians were said to have the “*Alamihi Syndrome*”—an *alamihi* is a common black crab that lives in Hawaiian shores:

This analogy has been repeated so often that now it is a part of the standard lore about Hawaiians’ behavior to other Hawaiians. By now even Hawaiians themselves believe it. Incidentally, the same analogy is used against the Maoris in New Zealand, against the coastal Indians in Canada and the United States, the Chamorros in Guam, and the natives of many another place. Invariably it is directed against the “natives” and rarely against the critical newcomers to any place. In any case, this crab mentality is said to be the cause of disunity among the “natives.” (Kanahele 1986, 450)

In addition, African Americans have also been described as a basket of crabs (Ellison 1995, 91). Similar to the Hawaiian predicament, the expression “crab mentality” was foreign to Filipinos but it has been repeated over and over to the point of acceptance as a truism. The misnomer is complicated because there seems to be *something* there that the expression “crab mentality” refers to in Filipino culture, but perhaps the expression “crab mentality”—with all its negative connotations—is not the best one to use. Conceptually speaking, it is the “shadow” of *pakikisama*. It is the natural response of the group to someone who does not have *pakikisama*. It is a natural familial or tribal response. When someone in the family or tribe ceases to care about the family or tribe, and perhaps even becomes a danger to the group, it is natural for the group, as a defense mechanism, to punish the wayward soul. It is likely that certain Americans, with their emphasis on individualism and personal freedom, did not like seeing this natural group response and coined the expression “crab mentality” to capture what they observed and what they simultaneously disdained. In order to refer to the same thing but minus the negative connotations, I opt to use the (admittedly clunky) phrase “group *amor propio*.” Just as the absence of *hiya* (*walang hiya*) leads to provoking someone’s *amor propio*, so a lack of *pakikisama* (*walang pakisama*) leads to a corresponding “group *amor propio*,” misleadingly called “crab mentality.”

A distinction must be made between the “crab mentality” that is simply envy—wanting to bring the other down because of unhappiness at another person’s success—and the “crab mentality” that is genuinely “group *amor propio*.” Admittedly there is a fine line between the two and it is indeed possible to have both at the same

Webster dictionary website, submitted on 2007 and 2014, the first one from a contributor in the Philippines (http://nws.merriam-webster.com/opendictionary/newword_display_alpha.php?letter=Cr).

time. But the ethical difference is that though the first is clearly a negative trait which is not to be condoned under any circumstance, the second may have some justification when understood within the wider context of *loób* and *kapwa*. This legitimate “group *amor proprio*” is exemplified in sports where teamwork is of crucial importance. In a basketball team every player must play his part and must take his orders from the coach. The ball must be passed from one player to another according to the chosen strategy. But what happens if one player disregards both the team and the coach and chooses to hog the ball and keep taking shots on his own? Players will be reluctant to pass him the ball and the coach will likely call him back to the bench at the soonest opportunity and keep him there—the management may even sack him later. Such a player is not allowed in a cooperative game.

The same principle applies to “group *amor proprio*.” The premise is that members of a team need to work together to succeed, thinking of what is best for the group. The group can be anything from the family or clan, a *barkada* (peer group), a sports team, a political party, a faculty department, to a business entity. When someone is going off on their own and succeeding at the expense of the group, the natural response is to bring this person down to his proper place. Perhaps the only person who has defended “crab mentality” is Miranda:

Even the so called “crab mentality” has its positive aspects. It is a mechanism not for cutting down a person for its own sake; it cuts a person down to size for his own good... It is directed only against those who have forgotten their roots in community and refuse their nature as social. It explains the mechanism of self-depreciation: when one is praised, one must disparage the praise, since success is never solely and fully one’s private achievement. (Miranda 1992, 204)

[Crab mentality] is a negative mechanism, but like all social sanctions, has a positive rationale behind it, an intent that should not be missed. One who makes it in life is reminded that he is a product of a collective vision, a product of a collective exercise, and hence responsible to the collectivity for what he has achieved, since he could never have achieved it all alone. (Miranda 1992, 219)

There is certainly a tension between the Western values that promote individual competition and success and a Filipino ethics that advocates a constant concern for the *kapwa* and the group’s success. It is an invisible tug of war in the culture that is the cause of many frustrations. But one point to keep in mind is that “crab mentality” is “crab mentality” only when seen through the lens of Western values. The native peoples themselves never considered it “crab mentality” or imagined it as something negative. It was also about group survival and group flourishing. As MacIntyre says in his *Dependent Rational Animals*, “it is most often to others that we owe our survival, let alone our flourishing” (MacIntyre 1999, 1). The idea behind “crab mentality” is that flourishing means to flourish as a group or not at all. To bring down the extreme individualist is “society... using its moral power to recall an errant member” (Miranda 1992, 220).

4.6 *Lakas-ng-loób*

4.6.1 *Lakas-ng-loób* and the *bayani*

Lakas-ng-loób is literally “strength of will” and corresponds to the cardinal virtue of courage or fortitude. But to say that it is simply “courage” may be misleading. The tribal tradition considered courage primarily in the form of the tribal warrior hero, such as those found in the epics.²⁶⁴ The epics depict a heroic age similar to the time of Homer, and as MacIntyre says, in such a heroic age “courage [was] important, not simply as a quality of individuals, but as the quality necessary to sustain a household and a community” (MacIntyre 1985, 122). In other words courage was about the survival of the tribe, or about those exploits which would benefit the tribe and the community as a whole.

This tribal form of courage was eventually transformed by the *Pasyon* (Passion of Christ) play, which one could argue became the new epic for the Tagalogs during the Spanish period. The first Tagalog *Pasyon* play was written in 1703 by Gaspar Aquino de Belen. A newer version in 1814, called the *Pasyon Pilapil*, became the most popular version of the play. In a population with very low literacy this play was a tremendous influence, and in fact, as Reynaldo Ileto has pointed out, the *Pasyon* was what molded the sentiments of the masses who joined the Philippine revolution (in contrast with the *ilustrado* or “enlightened” class who studied in Europe) (Ileto 1979). The suffering Christ became the new tribal hero. But instead of killing and pillaging he won through suffering and self-sacrifice. Nevertheless it was a sacrifice for the collective, this time represented by Mother Country (*Inang Bayan*).²⁶⁵ This formed the unique criteria for the *bayani* or “hero”: the mixture between a tribal warrior and the suffering Christ. His courage must be both collective and sacrificial.

Ileto describes how the millenarian leaders like Apolinario de la Cruz, Julian Baltazar, and Felipe Salvador drew people to themselves, and how they had the ability to strengthen the courage of their followers. People sought them out as messiahs or Christ-figures because of the reputed purity or integrity of their *loób*. As Ileto says of Felipe Salvador, the leader of the Santa Iglesia: “We can conclude that people flocked to him because they recognized him as a man of exemplary *loób*, a man of extra-ordinary power, and a figure of Christ the redeemer” (Ileto 1979, 294-295).²⁶⁶ But people also flocked to such Christ figures because they believed them to

²⁶⁴ For a representative collection see *Philippine Folk Literature: The Epics* (2001) compiled by Damiana Eugenio.

²⁶⁵ The image of Mother Country is based on the image of the Virgin Mary. “The very notion of Mother Country rode on popular images of the Virgin Mary, who appears in the *pasyon* as the ideal Filipino mother, behaving in the traditional fashion as the son persists in his untraditional mission” (Ileto 1979, 130).

²⁶⁶ Talking also about Octabio San Jorge, the right hand man of Apolinario de la Cruz: “As in the case of Octabio, a leader has *liwanag* [light] to the extent that he has a “genuinely transformed *loób*”; his “charisma” rests not necessarily upon wealth, status or education but upon a “beautiful” *loób* that attracts others” (Ileto 1979, 58). And further, “The case of Octabio mentioned earlier reveals that the leaders of the Cofradia were extraordinary individuals because they had exemplary control of their *loób*; consequently they could be, like

be “saviors” who were genuinely concerned about their spiritual welfare and their material poverty. Because of the Christ-aspect of *lakas-ng-loób*, it is combined with other emotions such as compassion for others, especially those who are poor and oppressed. Miranda talks about the “revolutionary *loób*” of the Katipunan (the revolutionary movement during the late 19th century), which is the same as *lakas-ng-loób*:

Loob, as the Katipunan understood it, was not only the inner self of the Katipunero [member of the Katipunan] as an individual; it was also the inner self of the masses in general... For the revolutionary *loob*, *damay* [sympathy] and *awa* (pity) had a common reference: a compassionate oneness with the suffering comrades and connationals [sic]. *Loob* in this sense was the solidarity of conscience. (Miranda 2003, 193)

The collective nature of *lakas-ng-loób* and its relationship with *kapwa* was also duly noted by Enriquez:

Lakas ng loob is a *damdamin* (internal feel/attribute/trait) necessary for actualizing the good not only in one’s self but also in one’s fellow man (*kapwa*), in one’s *loob*, and in facilitating the “social good” in *kapwa*. (Enriquez 1992, 89)

De Guia, echoing Enriquez, argued that

...*lakas ng loob* does not actualize the good in one’s self alone, but awakens also the goodness in others. Like a bushfire, this value can spread the valor of one and ignite latent courage in many.... *lakas ng loob* and the closure-seeking propensity of *kapwa* can facilitate the social impact where one brave heart rouses the goodness and courage in many others.²⁶⁷ (de Guia 2005, 170)

Both Enriquez and de Guia identified the collective nature of *lakas-ng-loób* which strengthens others (the *kapwa*), but they failed to identify the “sacrificial” and “Christ-like” character of *lakas-ng-loób* which Ileto discovered. In sum, the *bayani* (hero) who has *lakas-ng-loób*, insofar as he is faithful to the two older traditions, is a combination of the tribal warrior and the suffering Christ. His courage must be both collective and sacrificial.

Amongst the Philippine national heroes Jose Rizal and Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino Jr. are given a privileged place because they most closely fulfill these criteria of a *bayani*.²⁶⁸ They both suffered and were martyred by the oppressive authority (the Spanish administration executed Rizal in 1896 and the Marcos dictatorship

Octabio, lamps that guided others who faltered or, as Apolinario said of the *fondadores*, eyes that gave sight to the blind” (Ileto 1979, 60).

²⁶⁷ There is a certain Filipino term that ridicules a kind of “daring” or “courage” for the sake of the self alone, called “*makapal ang mukha*” (thick faced) which is used for someone who is socially presumptuous, seeking only his own benefit at the expense of exploiting others. It is parallel to the other vices of Filipino virtue ethics such as *walang utang-na-loób* and *walang hiya*.

²⁶⁸ The Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno called Rizal a “Tagalog Hamlet” and a “Tagalog Christ” (Unamuno 1907). The Rizalista religious movements believe that Rizal is divine and that he is still alive.

assassinated Aquino in 1983). They both gave their lives for the sake of the country. They could have stayed overseas but chose to return to the Philippines to face the oppressive authority and eventually sacrifice their lives. Because of their martyrdom, they were able to inspire powerful collective movements that eventually toppled the oppressive authority. The death of Rizal inspired the Katipunan and the Philippine Revolution in the 1890s. The death of Aquino inspired the EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the long stretch of road where the revolution took place) People Power revolution of 1986. The parallelism between the two phases of history should not be overlooked. “To a point it can be argued that EDSA is a modern re-enactment of the millenarian spirit of Philippine history” (Miranda 1992, 238). It is in such movements that the collective and sacrificial nature of *lakas-ng-loób* is most conspicuous. As Enriquez explicitly says, “The People’s Power revolution illustrates *kapwa* and *lakas ng loob*” (Enriquez 1992, 90). This is also an important key when analyzing Philippine politics; why presidential candidates often portray themselves as messianic figures who will finally save the people, and why the general population is “gullible,” constantly hoping for the arrival of another savior. The pattern is inscribed in Philippine history.

On the other end of the spectrum there are certain Philippine national heroes who do not deserve to be called heroes based on the criteria of courage and sacrifice. Foremost amongst these is Emilio Aguinaldo, a leader of the Katipunan and the first president of the revolutionary Philippine government. To consolidate his power he ordered the killing of other *bayani* such as Andres Bonifacio and Antonio Luna (Agoncillo 1990, 180-181; 221-222). The paradox of the Philippine roster of heroes is that there is this one *bayani* who ordered the killing of two other *bayani*. His inclusion in the roster of heroes is based on a different set of criteria. If Rizal and Aquino are counted heroes in the criteria of Filipino virtue ethics, Aguinaldo is a hero through the criteria of consequentialism. Whereas Rizal and Aquino evinced a sacrificial *loób* for the nation, Aguinaldo is known for his cunning, opportunism, and the establishment of the first Philippine government. In other words Rizal and Aquino are *bayani* because of who they were as persons, because of the quality of their *loób*, while Aguinaldo is considered a *bayani* simply because of what he did, a kind of “end justifying the means.” Therefore he should not be considered a *bayani* at all if we were more faithful to the criteria of Filipino virtue ethics. It is also interesting to note that the same reasoning that lies behind preserving Aguinaldo as a *bayani* is the same reasoning that is used by Marcos supporters to defend the legacy of the dictator Marcos: how the government was more efficient, the economy better, or how the streets were cleaner during his time (the consequences), never mind that he was a murderer, plunderer, liar, and adulterer (the absence of virtue). If one uses Filipino virtue ethics as a standard one can immediately see through the irony of such consequentialist reasoning. And if one uses Filipino virtue ethics one would no longer consider Aguinaldo a *bayani*.

Lakas-ng-loób, when explained through a knowledge of the Southeast Asian tribal tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition, is pretty straightforward. It is not

just “courage” pure and simple but one that is both tribal/collective and Christ-like/sacrificial. These are the criteria for a *bayani* or Philippine hero. However there is an aspect of *lakas-ng-loób* which scholars have found very difficult to understand, especially because it was often studied in isolation. This is *bahala na*.

4.6.2 *Bahala na* for the sake of the *kapwa*

The debate concerning *bahala na* began when Lynn Bostrom equated the Filipino phrase with American fatalism, which is a kind of resignation to the present situation or circumstances (Bostrom 1968).²⁶⁹ Her initial article was countered by Alfredo Lagmay who argued that *bahala na* was not the same as fatalism but was instead “a functionally positive response to uncertainty” (Lagmay 1993, 35) – that is, a positive and courageous response towards an uncertain (perhaps risky or dangerous) situation. Succeeding scholars generally accept this more positive interpretation of *bahala na*.²⁷⁰ Miranda explains it in more detail:

When the Filipino says “*Bahala na*”, several things are implied: (a) he does not know at that point how things will turn out, (b) he assumes responsibility nonetheless to try and do something to influence events, (c) he assumes such responsibility knowing well that the case looks hopeless, (d) he hopes that luck will help when other things fail. (Miranda 1992, 218)

Lagmay presents some examples of *bahala na*:

A photographer says that he will take some pictures but has only one camera; and he may run out of film, he says, or that the camera may fail to function, and he does not know where all these will lead to, even as he brings all his materials and whatever else. *Bahala na!*

When one has something to be carried out and the means are not adequate, for instance, lack of money when going out on a date. Still he decides to make do with what he has. *Bahala na!*

A student says that he was going to take an examination and there was no more time for any form of preparation. Though unprepared ... *Bahala na!* (Lagmay 1993, 32)

²⁶⁹ Speaking of this initial and mistaken interpretation, Jose de Mesa says, “*Bahala na* is used as an encompassing concept to characterize the so-called Filipino fatalistic attitude or resigned acceptance of his lot in life. So widespread is its use that *bahala na* is said to be the best symbol of the natural fatalism of the Filipino” (de Mesa 1987, 148). And Jocano: “The most popular one is the negative version that describes *bahala na* as fatalism, resignation, avoidance of responsibility, reliance on fate, and leaving things to chance” (Jocano 1997, 110). As for the supposed connection between *bahala na* and *Bathala* (God), as though *bahala na* was a corruption of *bathala na* (let God take care of it), this linguistic connection has generally been debunked. “Linguists tell us that *bahala na* does not refer to the god Bathala nor does the expression as such mean “God will provide,” as has at times been wrongly interpreted in the past” (de Mesa 1987, 149).

²⁷⁰ “*Bahala na* is the daring and courage of the Filipino when he is caught in a tight situation. He fights not knowing the outcome but, nevertheless, hopes for the best” (de Mesa 1987, 163). “*Bahala na* is the inner strength to dare, to take a risk, to accept a challenge, to initiate and move, to assume responsibility for an act” (Jocano 1997, 110). “[*Bahala na*] isn’t automatic resignation but a way to embolden oneself, almost like ‘I’m going to do what I can’” (Tan 2013).

Bahala na, taken in its own right, is quite simply a positive confrontation of uncertainty. However, when it is investigated in isolation it is prone to be misunderstood as indifference or irresponsibility, similar to the English expressions “whatever” or “who cares!” The above examples do not necessarily reflect a strictly negative attitude (especially the first two examples), but neither would they be considered strictly virtuous. Indeed, if the student in the last example did not prepare due to laziness, he could still say *bahala na* and take the exam, and that would have been similar to the expression “whatever!” *Bahala na* would then be viewed as something negative, an excuse for irresponsibility. “*Bahala na*, we said can mean assumption of responsibility; like all values it can lapse into ambiguity, where it can express the opposite, which is abdication of responsibility” (Miranda 1992, 220).²⁷¹ Perhaps this explains why in a survey recently conducted by Clemente et al., 76% of the correspondents (students aged 16-23) did not consider *bahala na* as a value (2008, 13). It is a two-faced concept that can easily be seen as negative.

In the face of this ambiguity, I claim that genuine *bahala na* is a special act of the virtue of *lakas-ng-loób*. This distinction between “act” and “virtue” is once again inspired by Aquinas as we will see in the following section where Aquinas identifies martyrdom as the perfect act of the virtue of courage (4.6.3). This distinction between “act” and “virtue” is a means to connect the concept of *bahala na* to *lakas-ng-loób*, which is in turn integrated into the larger system of Filipino virtue ethics. Therefore, *bahala na* needs to be properly understood in light of the general characteristics of Filipino virtue ethics. *Bahala na* must be grounded on a concern and sacrifice for the *kapwa*. It is also connected to the notion of the *bayani* (hero) that was discussed above. Once this connection is made, then we can rule out versions of *bahala na* that express indifference or irresponsibility as “defective” forms of *bahala na* since they ignore and compromise the spirit of the other Filipino virtues.

The actions of Rizal and Aquino, who came back to the country despite knowing that they risked their lives in doing so were acts of genuine *bahala na*. The attitude was present even if the phrase itself was not uttered. It involved the willingness to sacrifice one’s life for the country (*bayan*), composed of many *kapwa*. Take also the example of 18-year-old Filipino construction-worker, Muelmar Magallanes, who in the midst of Tropical Storm Ondoy or Ketsana in 2009 “braved rampaging floods to save more than 30 people, but ended up sacrificing his life in a last trip to rescue a baby girl who was being swept away on a styrofoam box” (Aurelio 2009). It is not reported whether he said the words *bahala na* as he dove into the raging waters, but his actions very clearly showed it. There was uncertainty if he could survive such violent forces but he did his best to save others. In this sense Magallanes fits the criteria for a *bayani* or hero albeit in a smaller scale.

²⁷¹ “If one focuses on the aspect of withdrawal from anxiety, the positive element is present; if one, however, sees it as a dereliction of duty, it is negative” (de Mesa 1987, 148-149).

The OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are also often hailed as *bayani* because they fulfill this characteristic of *bahala na* for another: the uncertainty of leaving for abroad, some of them not even guaranteed a job, and yet for the sake of providing for a struggling family back home. It is the same pattern.

One should also pay attention to the meaning of the word “*bahala*.” “*Bahala*’, the root word of the expression means primarily ‘responsibility’” (de Mesa 1987, 161).²⁷² It may or may not be a linguistic coincidence that *bahala* and the ideal form of *bahala na* involve responsibility, but whether it is a coincidence or not, it can help bolster the claim. One can for example say, “*Huwag kang mag-alala, ako ang bahala sayo* [Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you].” One can also say “*bahala ka*” or “*ikaw bahala*,” meaning “you be the one in charge” or “you be the one to decide.” Mercado was able to note this interesting linguistic connection between *bahala* and *bahala na*:

Bahala na is not pure fatalism because the expression connotes various things. *Bahala* is not derived from *Bathala* (‘lord’); its etymology seems to come from the Sanskrit *bhara*, ‘load’. The shift from *bhara* to *bhala* or from /r/ to /l/ is a common linguistic phenomenon. And the meaning ‘load’ can also be applied to ‘responsibility’, which is the ordinary Tagalog meaning of *bahala*. For example, ‘*Ikaw na ang bahala diyan*’ (Be responsible for that thing), ‘*Bahala na kami*’ (We shall see to it ourselves). Or when a Filipino is caught in a tight situation, he courageously fights back saying, ‘*Bahala na!*’ (Let come what may!). Hence one aspect of ‘*Bahala na!*’ is courage or the spirit to take risks. (Mercado 1976, 183)

As for the “*na*” in *bahala na*, Miranda says:

The key lies in the “*na*”. *Na* is an adverb that signifies now, already, soon, about to, more, anymore. After a verb in the past tense, *na* is equivalent to the English perfect tense – “has” or “have,” or the past of have: had. It can mean ever, at any time (even once). It is a particle that intensifies the meaning of an action or state that is final, concluded, or enjoined. *Bahala na* therefore means, if ever a time has come to say *bahala*, that time is now. There is nothing else to be said; *bahala na*. (Miranda 1992, 218)

Combining the insights of both, *bahala na* would be literally translated as “be responsible now!” It would mean being courageous and responsible in the face of uncertainty. The “*na*” also implies having exhausted all possible actions before plunging into the situation where the outcome is uncertain. And of course, the summit of responsibility is in being responsible not just for oneself but also for others. The greatest act of *bahala na* is precisely in taking on a great responsibility for the sake of others, even if it means sacrificing one’s own life. The noble aspects of *bahala na* are brought out when it is properly situated inside Filipino virtue ethics as a special act of the virtue of *lakas-ng-loób*. The use of Aquinas’ philosophy in the

²⁷² “*Bahala* essentially refers to responsibility, concern, management and trust” (Miranda 1987, 51). “*Bahala* or its action-correlate *pagkabahala* means ‘to have responsibility, accountability, and concern over the welfare of other people, kinsmen or not, and that of society as a whole’” (Jocano 1997, 80-81).

articulation of a Filipino virtue ethics allows us to clear up the ambiguity surrounding this concept.

4.6.3 *Lakas-ng-loób* and Aquinas' courage and martyrdom

The connection between Aquinas' virtue of courage or fortitude (*fortitudo*) and its act called martyrdom (*martyrium*) is the distinction that I adapted to interpret *lakas-ng-loób* and *bahala na*. *Fortitudo* is a cardinal virtue and *martyrium* is its most perfect act. "The virtue of fortitude is about the fear of dangers of death"²⁷³ and "martyrdom is an act of fortitude."²⁷⁴ Correspondingly, *lakas-ng-loób* is a Filipino virtue and *bahala na* is its most perfect act.

Fortitude requires firmness and endurance in facing grave dangers, especially those that endanger one's life.

Fortitude may be taken to denote firmness only in bearing and withstanding those things wherein it is most difficult to be firm, namely in certain grave dangers. Therefore Tully says (Rhet. ii), that 'fortitude is deliberate facing of dangers and bearing of toils.'²⁷⁵

As with most of Aquinas' principal moral virtues, fortitude requires finding the mean through the use of one's reason and then abiding by that mean. "[Fortitude] is a virtue consisting in a mean according to right reason dealing with fear and daring on account of the good."²⁷⁶ It requires the guidance of prudence. For example, one should not choose to sacrifice one's life recklessly in a losing battle, but one must also stand one's ground insofar as there is a chance of victory. The typical situation for *fortitudo* is the battlefield. However, when it comes to a cause that transcends this life, namely the Christian faith, the unconditional sacrifice of life is permitted and considered the most perfect act of fortitude.²⁷⁷ "The perfect notion of martyrdom requires that a man suffer death for Christ's sake."²⁷⁸ It is the virtue of fortitude

²⁷³ "*Virtus fortitudinis est circa timores periculorum mortis*" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 123, a. 4, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1709).

²⁷⁴ "*Martyrium est actus fortitudinis*" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 124, a. 2, *sed contra*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1717).

²⁷⁵ "*Potest accipi fortitudo secundum quod importat firmitatem animi in sustinendis et repellendis his in quibus maxime difficile est firmitatem habere, scilicet in aliquibus periculis gravibus. Unde Tullius dicit, in sua rhetorica, quod fortitudo est considerata periculorum susceptio et laborum perpessio*" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 123, a. 2, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1708).

²⁷⁶ "*Fortitudo est virtus medio modo se habens secundum rationem rectam circa timores et audacias propter bonum*" (*Sententia libri ethicorum*, lib. 3, l. 18, n. 12; Litzinger trans. 1993, 194). And also: "Fortitude is a virtue, in so far as it conforms man to reason (*Fortitudo est virtus, inquantum facit hominem secundum rationem esse*)" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 123, a. 1, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1707).

²⁷⁷ "It goes without saying that readiness for self-sacrifice belongs in an essential way to charity. The question whether someone would love his neighbor more than his own body, for instance, is answered with an unhesitating affirmative by St. Thomas... In virtue of our natural constitution our body is indeed nearer to our soul than is our neighbor. However, our spiritual fellowship in view of sharing in the happiness to which we are called is more to be taken into account than the union of either of us with his own body" (McEvoy 2002, 35).

²⁷⁸ "*Ad perfectam rationem martyrii requiritur quod aliquis mortem sustineat propter Christum*" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 124, a. 4, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1718). Aquinas also says: "It belongs to fortitude

which produces the act of martyrdom, through the conviction of faith. “Martyrdom is related to faith as the end in which one is strengthened, but to fortitude as the eliciting habit.”²⁷⁹

There are very obvious differences between *fortitudo/martyrium* and *lakas-ng-loób/bahala na*. The latter is not as explicitly religious as the former. Whereas the first pair involves sacrificing one’s life for the sake of Christ and the faith, the second pair revolves around a sacrifice for other people, such as the family, *kapwa*, or the *bayan* (country as a whole). In this regard *lakas-ng-loób* and *bahala na* work on a more human level than their counterparts in Aquinas. However, one could argue that even if the sacrifice present in *lakas-ng-loób* and *bahala na* is not explicitly for Christ, it is still done *as* Christ, or *as* a Christ-figure. Certainly the Christian pattern is there. Aquinas can say from within his virtue ethics that “in Christ was the most perfect fortitude”²⁸⁰, and someone like de Mesa can also say from within Filipino virtue ethics:

Bahala na without active concern for others is a superficial kind of risk-taking, but with *malasakit* [compassion] it becomes a Christian risk-taking after the example of Jesus himself. We find this in Jesus when he dares to risk his person out of concern for another.²⁸¹ (de Mesa 1987, 168)

So there is a parallelism between *fortitudo/martyrium* and *lakas-ng-loób/bahala na* but also differences in contexts and emphases. Nevertheless, the differences in emphases can easily be explained by the differences in the goal (*telos*) of each system of virtue ethics. In the virtue ethics of Aquinas the goal (*telos*) is eternal beatitude (*beatitudo*), and the virtue of *fortitudo* and the act of *martyrium* directly contribute to attaining that goal. The goal (*telos*) of Filipino virtue ethics is unity (*pagkakaisa*) between the *loób* and *kapwa* (cf. section 3.3). There is something to be said about the unity that is sometimes gained when people face the danger of

to strengthen man in the good of virtue, especially against dangers, and chiefly against dangers of death, and most of all against those that occur in battle. Now it is evident that in martyrdom man is firmly strengthened in the good of virtue, since he cleaves to faith and justice notwithstanding the threatening danger of death, the imminence of which is moreover due to a kind of particular contest with his persecutors (*Ad fortitudinem pertinet ut confirmet hominem in bono virtutis contra pericula, et praecipue contra pericula mortis, et maxime eius quae est in bello. Manifestum est autem quod in martyrio homo firmiter confirmatur in bono virtutis, dum fidem et iustitiam non deserit propter imminencia pericula mortis, quae etiam in quodam certamine particulari a persecutoribus imminet*)” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 124, a. 2, *respondeo*; Fathers trans. 1947, 1716).

²⁷⁹ “*Martyrium comparatur ad fidem sicut ad finem in quo aliquis firmatur, ad fortitudinem autem sicut ad habitum elicentem*” (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 124, a. 2, ad 1; Fathers trans. 1947, 1717).

²⁸⁰ “*In Christo fuit perfectissima fortitudo*” (*Scriptum super sententiis*, lib. 3, d. 15, q. 2, a. 2, qc. 3, arg. 1; translation mine).

²⁸¹ “Jesus, out of concern for others, was ready to risk, to say, “*Bahala na!*” His concern was a concern unto death; his risk-taking was a risk unto death, death on a cross. More than this he was ready to risk all, even for us, sinners, so that we may find life (cf. Rom. 5: 6-8). *Bahala na* with *malasakit* becomes a Christian *bahala na*. It is the very experience of Jesus as a risk-taker out of concern for others that inspires us to take similar risks for others. To paraphrase St. Paul: “The *malasakit* [compassion] of Christ urges us to say, ‘*bahala na!*’” Christ crucified reminds us of the ultimate consequence of risk-taking out of concern for others, and yet this same death is the one to inspire us to say, “*Bahala na!*” as we are confronted with situations that demand risks” (de Mesa 1987, 168-169).

death together for the sake of a common cause, or also when each one knows that each member is willing to sacrifice him/herself for the other's welfare. "True brotherhood, according to Apolinario de la Cruz, exists only when the *loób* of the individual members have been 'converted,' and this can only be revealed when the *loób* is confronted with the imminence of death" (Ileto 1979, 302). This perhaps explains the impressive resilience of the millenarian movements which stayed true to its spirit of brotherhood.

In conclusion, even if *fortitudo/martyrium* has a different goal from *lakas-ng-loób/bahala na*, the underlying structure of virtue and act enables us to connect the latter two together, and then situate it properly in the overall organization of Filipino virtue ethics. This is a huge advantage in and of itself.

4.7 The Filipino virtues working together

After explaining each of the Filipino virtues we can now consider how they all work together. The virtue of *kagandahang-loób* is usually the first virtue, since this is what actualizes the other person as *kapwa*. It produces an act of kindness or generosity towards the other person, especially if the other person is in desperate need. The virtue of *utang-na-loób* is then practiced by the *kapwa* in order to respond to the *kagandahang-loób* received. This creates a circular and alternating dynamic between the *loób* and the *kapwa* which can be called the "beating heart" of Filipino virtue ethics. It is the ever increasing cycle of favors between two parties that strengthens the relationship.

Pakikiramdam is what guides and regulates this dynamic between *kagandahang-loób* and *utang-na-loób*, similar to how a thermostat is used to regulate temperature. It is especially useful in navigating one's way through the complexities of indirect communication. This also allows for a deeper knowledge of the person beyond the means of direct speech.

Hiya and *lakas-ng-loób* can be considered "preservatives." They preserve and protect the relationship. *Hiya* is a virtue that ensures that actions are not done only for one's own benefit but also for the welfare of the *kapwa*. The most common manifestation of this is in spoken communication, where one makes a serious effort not to offend the *kapwa* and injure the relationship. In this sense *hiya* makes use of the virtue of *pakikiramdam* to detect if boundaries have been trespassed. *Hiya* also has "secondary virtues," which apply to a group situation (*pakikisama*) or respond to the absence of *hiya* or *pakikisama* (i.e. *amor proprio*, "crab mentality"). *Lakas-ng-loób* is courage for the sake of the *kapwa*, the willingness to defend and make sacrifices for the *kapwa*. One of its special acts is called *bahala na*. The greatest act of *bahala na* is to sacrifice one's life for the *kapwa* or the *bayan* (country) as in the case of the great Filipino heroes (*bayani*).

Though *utang-na-loób* follows after a previous experience of *kagandahang-loób*, manifestations of *pakikiramdam*, *hiya*, and *lakas-ng-loób* may be

simultaneous with *kagandahang-loób*, such as when someone sacrifices his life for a complete stranger, or someone seeks to be polite and not offend a brand new acquaintance.

The operation of these virtues ensures a healthy relationship between the *loób* and *kapwa*, which is constantly strengthened. The goal (*telos*) of these virtues is a greater oneness or unity (*pagkakaisa*) between the persons involved. In Filipino virtue ethics this unity is what constitutes “happiness” (*eudaimonia*). Of course this ideal can fall short of the goal and can also be exploited (such as in the case of corruption through *utang-na-loób*). Nevertheless it is important to know what the ideal is in order to identify its abuses.

The opposite of these virtues can be called “vices.” The worst is the direct opposite of *kagandahang-loób*, to be a *masamang-loób* (bad-willed person) who seeks to abuse and exploit the *kapwa*. This title is usually given to criminals. The corresponding vice of *utang-na-loób* is *walang utang-na-loób* (lacking *utang-na-loób*). This too is negative since it is a refusal to engage in a *kapwa* relationship after one has already received *kagandahang-loób*. It is ingratitude, or at its worst, misanthropy.

To lack *pakikiramdam* is to be *manhid* (numb, insensitive), and does not immediately make a person “bad,” but it can contribute to the absence of the first two virtues which in turn has serious consequences. The person who is *walang hiya* (without *hiya*) is not able to restrain his selfish impulses or controls his words at the expense of the *kapwa* and that can be damaging towards *kapwa* relationships. The person who has no *lakas-ng-loób* is a *duwag* (coward), and in general it is not so grave, except of course when it becomes a matter of life and death. Meanwhile the person who has a selfish kind of *lakas-ng-loób* is called *makapal ang mukha* (thick-faced), which is the audacity to serve one’s personal interests even if it means exploiting others.

Filipino virtue ethics gives its own unique portrait of what it means to be a “good” or “bad” person, what it means to be “happy” or “unhappy.” These standards are the product of a particular culture with a specific history, but they also have the potential to speak to the universally human.

5 Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation was the articulation and organization of a Filipino virtue ethics. It was both a constructive and descriptive project. It was constructive in that it built on entirely new philosophical foundations (the metaphysics, psychology, and ethics of Aquinas) and descriptive in that it tried to remain faithful to how Filipino scholars have described Filipino concepts and how these concepts are encountered in real life. Rather than a complete innovation, one could call this project a “renovation,” similar to how an abandoned building that is on the verge of collapse can be renovated and improved with brand new construction materials.

Chapter 1 pointed out the weaknesses of talking about a “Filipino value system” and indicated the general advantages of shifting to a “Filipino virtue ethics.” It showed that the shift is not merely a switching of names but one with significant philosophical consequences. “Values” fail to give precise definitions for Filipino ethical concepts and explain how they are all interrelated to each other. On the other hand, “virtue ethics” has the advantage of a centuries-old philosophical tradition with powerful resources for explanation, from Aristotle to its most sophisticated development in Aquinas. “Virtue ethics” has also witnessed an international revival in the 20th century—a revival in which “Filipino virtue ethics,” if it is embraced, could productively take part.

Chapter 2 presented a survey of Philippine history in order to properly understand the background of Filipino ethical concepts. These ethical concepts were the result of the mixing of two traditions, namely, the Southeast Asian tribal and animist tradition and the Spanish Catholic tradition. A third tradition, the American tradition, provided the academic resources to articulate the raw material of the first two as “values.” The events of history have left the three traditions in “confusion.” There is still a lot of misunderstanding (e.g. the application of modern theories on pre-modern concepts) and conflict (e.g. exclusive individualism vs. Filipino ethical concepts). However, rather than think of the Philippines as a “damaged culture,” one can more productively think of it as a “hybrid culture” still in the process of synthesis. I intend the articulation of a Filipino virtue ethics to be a contribution to that synthesis.

Chapter 3 articulated the “two pillars” of Filipino virtue ethics: *loób* and *kapwa*. These concepts were articulated with the help of Aquinas’ metaphysics and psychology. The metaphysical doctrine of potency and act and the psychology of “powers of the soul” were borrowed from Aquinas to interpret *loób* as a “holistic and relational will.” It is “holistic” in the sense that other human powers (reason and the sensitive appetite) are not differentiated but still contained in it, and “relational” in the sense that it is in constant relation with the *kapwa*. This Thomistic interpretation of *loób* serves as a useful corrective to modern anachronistic interpretations of *loób*

in terms of “interiority” or “subjectivity.” I also showed how Filipino ethical concepts can be understood as “habits” of the *loób*. This allows us to talk about them as a “virtue ethics.” Many Filipino ethical concepts are socially and culturally instilled “second nature.”

Kapwa is the second-person perspective of this *loób*. Each human being is potentially a *kapwa* and yet this *kapwa* relationship must be actualized and strengthened through the Filipino virtues. Thomist metaphysics, this time in the form of the innovation of Norris Clarke, was used to provide a metaphysics for *kapwa* in terms of “persons-in-relation.” This also serves as a protection from modern misinterpretations.

The goal or *telos* of Filipino virtue ethics is the greatest unity (*pagkakaisa*) between the *loób* and *kapwa*. This is the unity of wills both in seeking what is good for the other and in the commitment to the preservation and strengthening of the relationship. *Pagkakaisa* is what constitutes “happiness” within the perspective of Filipino virtue ethics.

Chapter 4 used the ethics of Aquinas to articulate and organize the Filipino virtues. Five principal virtues from Aquinas (*caritas*, *prudentia*, *justitia*, *temperantia*, and *fortitudo*) were used to organize five Filipino virtues (*kagandahang-loób*, *utang-na-loób*, *pakikiramdam*, *hiya*, and *lakas-ng-loób*). This provided an extremely useful organizing principle for explaining how the Filipino virtues are connected with each other and work together. It allowed for the “systematic” organization of Filipino virtue ethics based on philosophical foundations. The process also highlighted the uniqueness of Filipino virtue ethics as a much more “relational” virtue ethics compared to the virtue ethics of Aquinas.

As an exercise in evaluating what this dissertation has accomplished, I propose three points:

1) *Scope and organization*: it is the first time that all these Filipino concepts have been brought together in such a complete and organized way. Its scope exceeds all the previous studies in the academic literature which have tended to focus on a few elements or concepts at a time. This dissertation has presented Filipino virtue ethics as a more or less complete “system” where Filipino ethical concepts have their proper place and cooperate to achieve a certain goal.

2) *Depth of explanation*: the use of the metaphysics, psychology, and ethics of Aquinas allowed us to articulate Filipino ethical concepts in ways never done before. The identification of *loób* as a “holistic and relational will” and as a “power of the soul,” *kapwa* as the second-person perspective of this *loób*, and Filipino ethical concepts as “habits” and “virtues” of this *loób* sharpens the understanding of Filipino concepts beyond what has so far been possible. It also prepares the ground for productive future research by providing Filipino scholars with a new philosophical vocabulary beyond the limited vocabulary of “values.”

3) *Originality and innovation*: the use of Aquinas for the articulation and organization of Filipino ethical concepts has never been done before. Aquinas is an apt choice because he is an undeniable part of Philippine intellectual history through the Spanish Catholic tradition, he is a “pre-modern” philosopher who can congruently address “pre-modern” concepts, and he has arguably the most comprehensive and detailed account of virtue ethics ever written. Though others may innovate and use other interpretative frameworks in the future, the creative use of Aquinas in this instance presents a significant improvement over the *status quo* of “values.”

Of course there are also limitations to this research. As mentioned at the beginning, this dissertation is about *a* Filipino virtue ethics and not *the* (one and only) Filipino virtue ethics. The concepts investigated here are derived from Tagalog language and culture. Beginning with Tagalog concepts is a natural choice because Tagalog is the language of the capital of Manila, it has the greatest number of native speakers, and it is the most extensively influenced by the Spanish and American traditions. There are, however, also many other languages and cultures in the Philippines that warrant investigation (e.g. Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon, etc.). I have also been compelled to ignore the Muslim traditions of the south, which have a different intellectual history altogether. Future research would, therefore, take these other languages and cultures into account, especially through joint-research and cooperation with respective experts.

Another possible criticism is that though the Filipino virtues in this work have been extensively articulated, there are other Filipino virtues that have been left out simply because they did not correspond to any virtues in Aquinas. For example, Clemente et al. include *paggalang* (respect, especially towards elders) and *Maka-Diyos* (God-fearing) as important Filipino values (2008, 19). It is true that in choosing Aquinas as an interpretative framework, certain choices needed to be made. It cannot be claimed that the list of Filipino virtues here is complete and exhaustive, but I think that I have managed to deal with the majority of the most well-known Filipino (Tagalog) virtues. Also, the door is not closed to incorporating other Filipino virtues as “parts” of the major Filipino virtues since I have made use of Aquinas’ notion that a virtue can have “parts.”

It is my hope that this dissertation has successfully articulated and organized a Filipino virtue ethics and laid a solid foundation upon which other future studies could be made, not just by philosophers but by scholars of any discipline. “Filipino virtue ethics” presents itself as a broad interdisciplinary project. Consistent with the idea of needing the *kapwa* to succeed, I end with the words of Mercado as he completed his pioneering attempt at Filipino philosophy many decades ago:

This pioneering work is but the skeleton of Filipino philosophy. The task of putting flesh on the skeleton cannot be done single-handed. The task requires the interdisciplinary cooperation of linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists,

theologians, philosophers. The philosophers are called upon to make a higher synthesis of empirical findings. And conversely, the empiricists have the task of testing the insights of the philosophers. (Mercado 1976, 202)

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